Inductive Studies in Browning

Peterson

St. Vincent Academy
[illegible], Montana

ST. VINCENT ACADEMY

STUDENTS' LIBRARY

821.7
B82p
1908

This book may be withdrawn for two weeks, with privilege of renewal for two weeks, on presentation of borrower's card.

For books kept overtime a fine of one cent a day is charged.

The loss, soiling or disfigurement of books, such as marking, folding, or tearing of the leaves or illustrations, must be compensated for by the borrower.

Library books should not be left lying about the yard, recreation or reading-room, or on window-sills in the corridors, but should remain in the care of the borrower.

1564

Keep Your Card in This Pocket

DISCARDED
FROM
LIBRARY
Cathedral High School

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/inductivestudies0000cpet

INDUCTIVE STUDIES

IN

BROWNING

FOR

SECONDARY SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND LITERATURE CLUBS.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED.

BY H C. PETERSON, PH. D.

Library
Central Catholic High School
Helena, Montana

AINSWORTH & CO.,
CHICAGO,
1908.

Cathedral High School

1564

COPYRIGHTED
1903
BY AINSWORTH & CO., CHICAGO.

821.
B885iP

PREFACE.

It has become necessary to make new plates of this book; and I seize the occasion to revise the editorial matter in the light of the experiences I have undergone with it, since the first edition appeared.

The foot-notes have been increased in number and have been restricted to explanations of the author's language; all purely antiquarian or historical comment has been omitted. The questions have, I think, been made more inductive; each set of them has been introduced by a short paragraph or two in elucidation of the poem under treatment. A number have been left out; this has made the lessons less cumbrously exhaustive and more teachable.

The aim in making ready the first edition has been kept with still greater fixity; that was to furnish something definite for the pupils to do in preparing a "lesson" in Browning. Students of literature in schools are continually discouraged by lack of definiteness in the requirements made of them. Shall they be told to prepare on linguistic peculiarities, on historical allusions, on the general subject-matter? Yet they have no way of knowing what a peculiarity of language is; no way of knowing what is salient and what commonplace in the external allusions; no way of judging what must be scrutinized and what may be let pass.

Teachers of languages and mathematics, on the other hand, are much more pleasantly situated. Their students have definite exercises set them from day to day; they can know precisely when they have "got" their lesson, can know what it is they do not grasp, can know how much of their daily work they fail to do. In all this, there is a certain satisfaction. On the contrary, "I don't know what you want us to do" is the perplexed complaint that accompanies most work in literature.

To furnish something specific for students of Browning to prepare each day, just as text-books in Latin or Algebra furnish it for students in these subjects, is what this book attempts to do. There are, no doubt, questions that many students will be unable to answer; but such unevenness of work is characteristic of all teaching. It is not primarily intended that the questions shall form the basis for the recitation; let the teacher teach as he always has—in his individual way. This book furnishes merely

work for the students to do; it does not propose any special method for the teacher—who, if he teach at all, must teach out of his own inner self.

Browning is hard—no doubt! But he is also very satisfying; always excepting Shakespeare, no poet in our literature so richly rewards the work put upon him. Yet no mistake can be greater than to think that our author is uniformly difficult; no poems can be found in English that are simpler in thought or in structure than the first few in this collection. Moreover, the arrangement here followed is strictly inductive; and in the end, the student will find that he has unconsciously—and therefore out of himself and for himself—built up a conception of the poet and of his place in modern literature. To begin the study of Browning with *Saul, Abt Vogeler, Caliban,* the *Epistle of Karshish* is poor pedagogy.

Browning's poetry divides itself into certain classes—love poems, music poems, humorous, satirical poems, poems personal to himself; studies in art, in mediæval Christianity, in religion, in the spiritual life of the Renascence. All these classes are represented here by some of the simpler examples.

It is suggested that the poems which are too long for one lesson be not divided, but be taken as a whole two or three times, and that the student be required to answer, for each lesson, as many of the entire set of questions as he can.

With these few remarks I confide the book to the favor of those who have used it in the past and to the kindness of those who are striving to get the young people of our land into companionship with the greater poets of our literature.

CONTENTS.

	PAGES
Preface	v–vi
The Patriot	1–2
"How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix"	3–7
The Laboratory	7–11
Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister	11–15
The Italian in England	15–22
A Toccata of Galuppi's	22–27
The Lost Leader	27–29
Holy-Cross Day	30–36
Andrea Del Sarto	37–49
Fra Lippo Lippi	49–65
Porphyria's Lover	66–68
The Last Ride Together	69–75
The Heretic's Tragedy	75–81
My Last Duchess	81–85
Up at a Villa—Down in the City	85–90
The Guardian Angel	91–93
Prospice	94–96
Count Gismond	96–104
The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church	105–111
"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came"	112–123

THE PATRIOT.

AN OLD STORY.

I.

IT was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

II.

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterwards, what else?"

III.

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Naught man could do, have I left undone:
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

IV.

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the windows set;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shambles' Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

V.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

VI.

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
"Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
Me?"—God might question; now instead,
'T is God shall repay: I am safer so.

[This poem was first published, 1855, in a collection of fifty-one pieces called *Men and Women*.[1] It does not refer to any one in particular.]

QUESTIONS.

1. [St. IV.] Why is there nobody on the house-tops?
2. Who are the only persons that are not in the street? Why are they not?
3. How must the "palsied" few have gotten to the windows?
4. Why could they not just as well have been left back in their beds?
5. [St. V.] What words increase the dismalness of this picture?
6. How has the rope come to cut the captive's wrists *more than needful*?
7. Why can he not be sure his forehead bleeds?
8. [St. I.] Where was everybody a year ago? Why?
9. Why were there roses and myrtle in the patriot's path?
10. What statement indicates most strongly the boundless love of the populace?
11. In what way is the sub-title fitting?
12. What is the grammatical relation of the sentence quoted [St. VI, l. 3.] to the verb "question"?
13. What philosophy is indicated in the last three lines?

[1] It is hoped that the student will remember the few bits of biography and bibliography, given from time to time, throughout the following pages.

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX."

[16—.]

I.

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

II.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique[1] right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III.

'T was moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;

[1] The pommel of the saddle.

And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

IV.

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through[1] the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

V.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

VI.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris "Stay spur!
Your Roos[2] galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We 'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

---

1 In the authorized edition of 1872, *through* and *though* were uniformly spelled *thro'* and *tho'*. The traditional spelling was, however, subsequently restored.

2 Horse—a Dutch word.

VII.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

VIII.

"How they 'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

IX.

Then I cast loose my buff-coat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

X.

And all I remember is—friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,

As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent. 60

[This poem first appeared in a series of sixteen-page, double-column pamphlets, called *Bells and Pomegranates*, which began to issue in 1841 and ran through eight numbers to 1846. This publication was started at the suggestion of Mr. Browning's printers, because the poet's early volumes would not sell. It was in No. VII, entitled *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, 1845, that the present piece first saw the light.

How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix has no basis in fact. The ride was across what is now Belgium from Ghent to Aachen in Germany. The intervening places may be found on any map.]

QUESTIONS.

1. Who is the person referred to by the pronoun "he" in the first line?
2. How did the speaker mount?
3. Why did he mount in that manner?
4. Why did not the wall re-echo the word "Good" also?
5. In what way does the sound of line 2 fit the sense?
6. In what way does the metre of the poem suit the story?
7. Why did the men not talk as they rode?
8. What was the condition of the saddle and the saddle-girths?
9. What does this show of the way the men had begun their ride?
10. Why did the speaker loosen the bit?
11. How do Stanzas III and IV show us the passing of the night and the approach of morning?
12. Under what conditions, as shown by the words "at last" [St. IV, 1, 4], must the men have been riding?
13. What is the most picturesque and suggestive expression in this stanza?
14. What points of description in Stanza V idealize the horse?
15. How many accented words can you find in Stanza V.
16. How does the author affect your opinion of Roland by permitting the other horses to give out?
17. What bits of graphic description in Stanza VI?
18. What time of day has it now, in Stanza VII, grown to be?
19. What verb, in this stanza, is used very strikingly to show the speed with which the riders approached the city?
20. What statement, Stanza VIII, serves the end suggested by question 16?

21. What points of description show the great strain Roland was under?
22. Why did the speaker cast off coat, boots, etc.?
23. Why did he not care what he shouted?
24. What statement, Stanza X, shows how he loved his horse?
25. What statement shows how the citizens regarded the horse?
26. How do you figure to yourself the situation, so as to reconcile the last word of Stanza IX with line 2 of Stanza X?
27. Did Roland survive the effort? [Compare the last line of Stanza IX.]
28. How do you feel over this?
29. Who is the hero of the poem?
30. Where is this ride supposed to have taken place, and when?
31. What was the state of the country at that time?

THE LABORATORY.

ANCIENT REGIME.

I.

NOW that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,
May gaze through these faint smokes curling whitely,[1]
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-smithy—
Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?

II.

He is with her, and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them!—I am here.

---

1 Arsenic gives off such white fumes, when subjected to chemical processes.

III.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder,—I am not in haste!
Better sit thus and observe thy strange things,
Than go where men wait me, and dance at the King's.

IV.

That in the mortar—you call it a gum?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,
Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison too?

V.

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures!
To carry pure death in an earring, a casket
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree basket![1]

VI.

Soon at the King's, a mere lozenge to give,
And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live!
But to light a pastile, and Elise, with her head
And her breast and her arms and her hands, should drop dead!

VII.

Quick—is it finished? The color 's too grim!
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim?
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,
And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer!

VIII.

What a drop! She 's not little, no minion like me!
That 's why she ensnared him: this never will free

[1] It was quite common, in those days, for murderers to so skillfully conceal poisonous powders or fluids in fans, rings, signets, and so forth, that the victim would, in using these objects, unconsciously inhale or absorb the drug and thus mysteriously die.

The soul from those masculine eyes,—say, "no!"
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

IX.

For only last night, as they whispered, I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall
Shrivelled; she fell not; yet this does it all!

X.

Not that I bid you spare her the pain;
Let death be felt and the proof remain:
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace—
He is sure to remember her dying face!

XI.

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose;
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee!
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

XII.

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings
Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the King's!

[This poem was first published in *Hood's Magazine*, for June, 1844. The following year it was included in No. VII of *Bells and Pomegranates*. It is a study of jealousy.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. What do you suppose is the use of the glass mask?
2. Where do you get your first hint of what the story is to be?

3. Do "they" care whether they conceal their doings from the speaker?
4. Where does she think they fancy she is foolish enough to be?
5. And what does she suppose they think her foolish enough to do?
6. But where does she vindictively say she *is*?
7. What seems to exasperate her the more: that "they" are together, or that they do not care if she knows it?
8. What should you say [St. III] had made her quiet and "not in haste"?
9. What additional bits of the story do this and the preceding stanzas give you?
10. What are her feelings [St. IV] toward the tree, and why does she feel thus towards it?
11. What are her feelings towards the phial, and why does it rouse such sentiments in her?
12. How comes it that she rejoices so greatly in thinking of these secret poisonings?
13. Which of the women [St. VI] does she dwell on, as possessing charms of special potency?
14. Does Elise seem to be large and plump, or small?
15. But how does the speaker, in Stanza VIII, describe herself?
16. Which of the two women, in Stanza VI, is it then, against whom the speaker is plotting?
17. What does the speaker [St. VII] fancy she sees Elise doing?
18. Read line 3, emphasizing the first word, and see what the effect is.
19. What animal, with its victim, are you, at this point, reminded of?
20. What sort of look must the speaker [St. IX] have bent on Elise?
21. What is there about Elise that would make the speaker like especially well to see her shrivelled?
22. In Stanza X, try emphasizing the first word of line 2 and see what the effect is.
23. What part of her rival's body is it that the speaker seems most eager to see shrivelled?
24. And for whose benefit?
25. Emphasize "dying" in the last line. What then would "his" last memory of Elise be like?
26. What is the speaker's feeling in Stanza XI, since she wishes to see the poison *close*?
27. What do you suppose it is that makes the chemist "morose"?
28. How much is she paying him for this poison?
29. Is this because he has asked so much; or is there some other reason to be sought for in her feelings?
30. Why does she ask the old man to kiss her?
31. What do you see [St. XII, l. 1] is the chemist's only object in life?

32. Does she mean she is going to *dance*, even though she says so? With what feeling does she say this?

33. In what country and in what period, do we, from the subtitle, see that the scene is laid?

SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER.

I.

GR-R-R—there go, my heart's abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you!
What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!

II.

At the meal we sit together:
Salve tibi![1] I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:
What's the Latin name for "parsley"?[2]
What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

III.

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we 're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,

1 Hail to you.

2 The italics in this stanza are apparently intended to represent that it is Brother Lawrence who speaks.

Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 't is fit to touch our chaps—
Marked with L for our initial!
(He-he! There his lily snaps!)

IV.

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
Squats outside the Convent bank
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horse hairs,
—Can 't I see his dead eye glow,
Bright as 't were a Barbary corsair's?
(That is, if he 'd let it show).

V.

When he finishes refection,
Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp—
In three sips the Arian[1] frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp.

VI.

Oh, those melons? If he 's able
We 're to have a feast: so nice!

1 Arius and Athanasius were two priests of Alexandria in the fourth century, who set up opposing doctrines concerning the relation of Christ to God. Arius held that Christ, the Son of God, was inferior to the Deity and dependent upon him; this established the doctrine of God's Unity. Athanasius taught that Christ was of identical substance with and equal to God, thus establishing the doctrine of the Trinity. The council of Nicæa in 325 pronounced for Athanasius. But the Germanic tribes had, in part, been converted to Arianism before this; and thus the dispute was prolonged far into the middle ages. To the unspiritual view of those times, being an Arian was a horrible sin.

One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble
Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

VII.

There's a great text in Galatians[1]
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations
One sure, if another fails:
If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to hell, a Manichee?[2]

VIII.

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On gray paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe:
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in 't?

IX.

Or, there's Satan!—one might venture
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave

1 The only text that seems to meet this description is found in X, 3: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

2 A follower of Manes, a Persian theologian and philosopher. Being a Manichee was a sin second in gravity only to being an Arian.

Such a flaw in the indenture[1]
As he 'd miss, till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We 're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine*[2] . . . 70
'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratia*
Ave, Virgo![3] Gr-r-r—you swine!

[This poem was first published in No. III of *Bells and Pomegranates* with the title *Camp and Cloister*. It is intended to show what much of the cloister Christianity is like in southern countries.]

QUESTIONS.

1. Do you find any strong language in the first stanza?
2. What would the speaker do to Brother Lawrence, if he only might?
3. What is Brother Lawrence's favorite occupation in his leisure hours?
4. What is the character of each as now already revealed?
5. How, in Stanza II, does the author let us know this is Spain?
6. In what mood does the speaker utter the words, "Wise talk"?
7. What does he mutter to himself after Lawrence stops speaking? What name does he, by implication, call Lawrence?
8. In Stanza III, whose initial is the *L*?
9. Who is meant by "We'll," "we're," "our"?
10. What uncommon luxury does the speaker deride?
11. What word might he have used instead of "chaps"?
12. What talk in the cloister about Lawrence does the speaker [St. IV, l. 1] next scoff at?
13. And in disproof of this possibility, what iniquity does he try to fasten on Lawrence?
14. But what does the parenthesis, closing the stanza, tell us?
15. What great want of piety is Lawrence next said to be guilty of?
16. Is the speaker, however, impious in this particular?
17. What dreadful sin must Lawrence be guilty of, to judge from the way he drinks his orange pulp?

---

1 An indenture was a written contract or agreement.

2 This is apparently meant to represent the sound of the Vesper bell.

3 Hail! Virgin, full of grace. The commencement of the Vesper service.

18. And how does the speaker carefully avoid falling into the same hideous sin?
19. What indication of character do you find towards the end of Stanza VI?
20. Why does the speaker wish to trip Lawrence just *a-dying*?
21. What trap does he, in Stanza VIII, meditate setting for Lawrence?
22. With what object does he contemplate making an agreement with Satan?
23. But who does he think will be the sharper, he himself, or Satan?
24. Where are his thoughts as he begins to chant his vesper service?

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND.

THAT second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her blood-hounds through the country-side,
Breathed hot and instant on my trace,—
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked
The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping through the moss they love:
—How long it seems since Charles was lost!
Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay
With signal fires; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich[1] our friend,
And Charles's[2] miserable end,

1 Prince Clemens von Metternich, Austrian prime minister.

2 Charles Albert, an Italian prince, who, in the earlier part of his career, was in full sympathy with the popular movement.

And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us in Lombardy, they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string,
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew. When these had passed,
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance: she did not start,
Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
One instant rapidly glanced round,
And saw me beckon from the ground:
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she stripped
A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast.
Then I drew breath; they disappeared:
It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown.
Meanwhile came many thoughts: on me
Rested the hopes of Italy;
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 't was told her, could not fail
Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,

And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and stood,
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm—
At first sight of her eyes, I said,
"I am that man upon whose head
They fix the price, because I hate
The Austrians over us: the State
Will give you gold—oh, gold so much!—
If you betray me to their clutch,
And be your death, for aught I know,
If once they find you saved their foe.
Now, you must bring me food and drink,
And also paper, pen and ink,
And carry safe what I shall write
To Padua, which you'll reach at night
Before the duomo[1] shuts; go in,
And wait till Tenebræ[2] begin;
Walk to the third confessional,
Between the pillar and the wall,
And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
Say it a second time, then cease;
And if the voice inside returns,
From Christ and Freedom; what concerns
The cause of Peace?—for answer, slip
My letter where you placed your lip;
Then come back happy we have done
Our mother service—I, the son,
As you the daughter of our land!"

1 The Cathedral.

2 An evening service.

Three mornings more, she took her stand
In the same place, with the same eyes:
I was no surer of sunrise
Than of her coming. We conferred
Of her own prospects, and I heard
She had a lover—stout and tall,
She said—then let her eyelids fall,
"He could do much"—as if some doubt
Entered her heart,—then, passing out,
"She could not speak for others, who
Had other thoughts; herself she knew:"[1]
And so she brought me drink and food.
After four days, the scouts pursued
Another path; at last arrived
The help my Paduan friends contrived
To furnish me: she brought the news.
For the first time I could not choose
But kiss her hand, and lay my own
Upon her head—"This faith was shown
To Italy, our mother; she
Uses my hand and blesses thee."
She followed down to the sea-shore;
I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought
Concerning—much less wished for—aught
Beside the good of Italy,
For which I live and mean to die!
I never was in love; and since
Charles proved false, what shall now convince
My inmost heart I have a friend?

---

1 This is a direct quotation and would, in most cases, have been written:—

"I cannot speak for others, who
Have other thoughts; myself I know."

However, if I pleased to spend
Real wishes on myself—say, three—
I know at least what one should be.
I would grasp Metternich until
I felt his red wet throat distil
In blood through these two hands. And next,
—Nor much for that am I perplexed—
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
Should die slow of a broken heart
Under his new employers. Last
—Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast
Do I grow old and out of strength.
If I resolved to seek at length
My father's house again, how scared
They all would look, and unprepared!
My brothers live in Austria's pay
—Disowned me long ago, men say;
And all my early mates who used
To praise me so—perhaps induced
More than one early step of mine—
Are turning wise: while some opine
"Freedom grows license,"[1] some suspect
"Haste breeds delay,"[1] and recollect
They always said, such premature
Beginnings never could endure![1]
So, with a sullen "All 's for best,"
The land seems settling to its rest.
I think then, I should wish to stand
This evening in that dear, lost land,
Over the sea the thousand miles,
And know if yet that woman smiles
With the calm smile; some little farm
She lives in there, no doubt: what harm
If I sat on the door-side bench,

1 These are the usual objections of dull and timid minds

And, while her spindle made a trench
Fantastically in the dust,
Inquired of all her fortunes—just
Her children's ages and their names,
And what may be the husband's aims
For each of them. I 'd talk this out,
And sit there, for an hour about,
Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing—how
It steals the time! To business now.

[This poem also was first published in No. VII of the *Bells and Pomegranates,* 1845.

After the downfall of Napoleon, the map of Europe was restored, as far as possible, to its former lines. The governments were reconstructed, and the deposed princes were returned to power. This was accomplished by a body of statesmen, called the Congress of Vienna.

It was in Italy that the principles of the French Revolution survived most vigorously; hence the Congress treated her with especial harshness. The many petty and insignificant governments that had existed before were revived; and the old foreign tyrants—French and Austrian—were restored. Lombardy and Venice were turned over bodily to Austria, and she was invested with a supervision over the whole peninsula. Victor Emanuel was the only ruler of native birth, and he was cooped up in the island of Sardinia. The Austrian rule was extremely harsh, and the Italians suffered greatly.

But this was the XIX century, and the people were determined on liberty and unity. The struggle began about 1820 and continued for fifty years, gaining ground steadily, until Victor Emanuel II, in 1871, was placed upon the throne of a united and independent Italy. The movement did not confine itself to the upper classes, but came to embrace men, women, and even children, of all ages and conditions. The names Carbonari, Garibaldi, and Cavour have come to be household words, synonymous with freedom. It was to the sternness and sincerity of the Italian peasantry that success was mainly due.

It is into this depth of the national character that Browning here gives us a glimpse. And it should be remembered that he lived in Italy, with but short intermissions, from 1846 to 1861, and that he thus saw much of this great movement with his own eyes.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. Where does the title tell us that the speaker is? What is he narrating?
2. Emphasize "second" and note what this shows?
3. Who had been the speaker's boyhood friend?
4. What sort of life had the speaker been leading?
5. Who was Prince Metternich?
6. How was he connected with Italy?
7. What seem to have been the feelings of the speaker towards him? (ll. 121-123.)
8. What was the reason for this?
9. How must we then take the expression, "Metternich our friend," line 19?
10. What is meant by lines 11 and 20?
11. What feeling is shown here towards Charles—malice, regret, joy, or pity?
12. How did the Austrians hunt the speaker?
13. What were the signal fires for?
14. How important must the speaker have been?
15. Do you take him to be a nobleman or a peasant?
16. What is his attitude towards his peasant countrymen? (ll. 24-34.)
17. Is this the feeling that men of his class usually entertain towards inferiors?
18. What "chance" did he feel he was taking in throwing his glove?
19. What trait of character is shown in the woman by the fact that she did not start or cry out?
20. What do you suppose she did with the branch, when she had rejoined her companions? (Compare ll. 28-29.)
21. Why did she break the branch off, in the first place?
22. Did she show the glove to anyone?
23. Who or what was it the speaker did *not* fear for?
24. How does line 50 corroborate the inferences from questions 14 and 15?
25. What had the speaker, against the woman's return, decided to tell her?
26. But what *did* he tell her?
27. How could he so recklessly have endangered himself?
28. Emphasize "peasant," in line 53, and note the feeling that is thus shown.
29. Indicate some points, directly descriptive of the woman, that appeal to you.
30. Did she, upon returning, look weary, or excited, or curious, or in any other way, abnormal?
31. How could the speaker have been so sure of her coming? (l. 91.)

32. What do you suppose it was that led him, after her report, to enter into conversation with her about her private life?
33. Did she not think her lover would be an excellent acquisition to their cause?
34. Yet why had she not confided in him?
35. What was the feeling which impelled her to bring the additional news that the Paduan friends were coming?—Was the speaker not saved already?
36. Was she really needed any more after getting help?
37. Then what was it that impelled her to follow the crowd down to the sea-shore?
38. If she had been needed, would she have *followed?*
39. [L. 115.] *Why* do you suppose the speaker had never been in love?
40. What feeling is indicated by the certainty with which he knew what his first wishes should be?
41. Yet, if he might have had but one wish, which would it have been?
42. Which of the two personages in the poem is idealized by this circumstance?
43. Would the speaker have been impelled to kiss the woman's hand solely because she had saved him? [Compare lines 106-107.]
44. Is it the man or the woman in the story for whose sake the poem has been written?
45. What may consequently have been Browning's opinion as to the degree of patriotic fervor shown by the sexes relatively to each other in this struggle?
46. What does this woman's constancy tell us concerning the nature of the struggle that was carried on against Austria?

A TOCCATA[1] OF GALLUPPI'S.

I.

OH Galuppi, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find!
I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove
me deaf and blind;
But although I take your meaning, 't is with such a
heavy mind!

---

1 A Toccata is a light prelude or overture to a piece of music, which merely suggests or *touches* the central idea, here and there. A sonata, on the other hand, is a deliberate working out of the feeling or the thought of the piece.

II.

Here you come with your old music, and here's all
the good it brings.
What, they lived once thus at Venice where the
merchants were the kings,
Where St. Mark's[1] is, where the Doges[2] used to
wed the sea with rings?[3]

III.

Aye, because the sea 's the street there; and 't is
arched by . . . what you call
. . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where
they kept the carnival:
I was never out of England—it 's as if I saw it all.

IV.

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea
was warm in May?
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to
mid-day,
When they made up fresh adventures for the mor-
row, do you say?

V.

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so
red,—
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-
flower in its bed,
O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man
might base his head?

---

1 The great cathedral at Venice.

2 The Doge was the head of the Venetian government. The word has sprung from the same root as our "duke" and means much the same.

3 This stately and solemn cermony of throwing a ring into the sea was kept annually to commemorate the old naval victories of the Venetians.

VI.

Well, and it was graceful of them: they'd break talk off and afford
—She, to bite her mask's black velvet—he, to finger on his sword,
While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at the clavichord.

VII.

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished, sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions—"Must we die?"
Those commiserating sevenths[1]—"Life might last! we can but try!"

VIII.

"Were you happy?"—"Yes."—"And are you still as happy?"—"Yes. And you?"
—"Then, more kisses?"—"Did *I* stop them, when a million seemed so few?"
Hark, the dominant's[2] persistence till it must be answered to!

IX.

So, an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised you, I dare say!
"Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and gay!
I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play!"

---

[1] These are technical combinations of tones in music, each producing on the hearer pretty much the effect indicated by the adjective.

[2] The dominant is the characteristic basic tone or chord that runs through a piece; it also represents the particular feeling or mood that pervades the composition.

X.

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due time, one by one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,
Death stepped tacitly and took them where they never see the sun.

XI.

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand nor swerve,
While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close reserve,
In you come with your cold music till I creep through every nerve.

XII.

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house was burned:
"Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what Venice earned.
The soul, doubtless, is immortal—where a soul can be discerned.

XIII.

"Yours for instance: you know physics, something of geology,
Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise in their degree;
Butterflies may dread extinction,—you'll not die, it cannot be!

XIV.

"As for Venice and her people, merely born to bloom and drop,
Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly were the crop:

What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing
had to stop?

XV.

"Dust and ashes!" So you creak it, and I want
the heart to scold.
Dear dead women, with such hair, too—what's be-
come of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly
and grown old.

[This poem was first published, 1855, in *Men and Women*. Galuppi Baldassaro was a prolific Venetian composer. He was born in 1706, lived for a time in London, and died in his native town, as organist at St. Mark's. Very little of his music has been preserved.

Galuppi must, however, have been a great composer: for the Englishman, as he plays, seems to see old Venice with its frivolity, and to hear the master's sad, ironical comments on the life of the time.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. What is the nationality of the speaker and of Galuppi?
2. What do you understand the Englishman to be doing as he speaks?
3. And what does he mean, at various places in the poem, by the expressions: "I can hardly misconceive you," "I take your meaning," and [l. 3, St. IV] "do you say"?
4. What is the feeling that the toccata at once produces on him?
5. Does the music speak plainly or vaguely?
6. Where does the picture of old Venice begin to shape itself in the player's imagination?
7. Why is Stanza III written in such an uncertain, hesitating manner?
8. What clause again indicates the excellence of Galuppi's toccata?
9. What scenes does the music now call forth in the Englishman's mind?
10. So it seems [St. VI] that Galuppi originally played this toccata under what circumstances?
11. What is the character of the thirds and sixths?
12. To judge by what the revellers of old Venice said, what was the character of the "suspensions and solutions," and of the "commiserating sevenths" in the toccata?
13. Who are the speakers in this imaginary dialogue, and what does each say?

15. What must be the character of the dominant in this piece of music—grave or gay, sad, ironical, or cynical?
16. Emphasize "master," in Stanza IX, and notice what feeling is thus shown.
17. What feeling does the toccata produce on the player in Stanza X?
18. What expression in Stanza XI describes the music?
19. What sarcasm [St. XII] does Galuppi seem to utter through his music?
20. And in Stanzas XIII and XIV?
21. What women does the speaker mean in Stanza XV?
22. What is the general and final effect of the toccata on the player?

THE LOST LEADER.

I.

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

II.

We shall march prospering,—not through his presence;
Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devil's-triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well,[1] for we taught him—strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

[This poem was first published, 1845, in No. VII of *Bells and Pomegranates*.

The former half of the XIX century was marked by agitations and uprisings, in favor of popular rights. This was a world phenomenon, of which we saw one phase in *The Italian in England*. The years 1820, 1830, 1848, and even 1871, are specially noted in history, as marking the fulfillment of many hopes.

In poetry this new enthusiasm, this new spirit, is known as the Romantic Revolution; it was represented in England by Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Shelley, Keats, and Byron.

In politics it was this spirit that battled for Catholic emancipation, for the abolition of the duty on grain, for Irish representation in Parliament, for the reform of the poor-laws, for the establishment of free, public schools. The poets mentioned above, especially the first three, were very active in these social reformatory movements also.

1 *That is*: Best *for him* to fight on well.

But Wordsworth, when years began to tell on him, abandoned the good cause, and ended by opposing reform as energetically as he had before advocated it. Browning, having been born in 1812, was but a youth in those days. He was a great admirer of these intense, progressive spirits; and it was Wordsworth's defection that inspired the present poem.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. Emphasize the first word and note the thought that is thus brought out.
2. Whom does the poet mean by "us"?
3. What is the "riband to stick in his coat" intended to signify?
4. What, then, was the "one gift," which they did not have to give?
5. And what were "all the others," which they did have to bestow upon their leader?
6. How highly do the leader's new companions value him?
7. How would his old friends' copper have been better than his new companions' silver?
8. How had his old friends always felt towards him?
9. What had his character been?
10. What line shows that he had been a *leader?*
11. What do you now see had been the calling of the leader and his band?
12. [St. II.] What does the speaker think will be the future of the cause, now that the leader has betrayed it?
13. But what touch of sadness blends with this belief?
14. Does the band grieve for themselves, or for him?
15. Do they hate him for deserting them?
16. What is meant by line 22?
17. Why should there be "doubt, hesitation, and pain," if he came back to them?
18. What is meant by line 28?
19. What does the speaker say they had taught him?
20. What would they dislike to see in their old leader, even though he be on the other side?
21. But which side do they know will conquer?
22. How will they, in the end, feel toward their "Lost Leader"?

HOLY-CROSS DAY.[1]

ON WHICH THE JEWS WERE FORCED TO ATTEND AN ANNUAL CHRISTIAN SERMON IN ROME.

["Now was come about Holy-Cross Day, and now must my lord preach his first sermon to the Jews; as it was of old cared for in the merciful bowels of the Church, that, so to speak, a crumb at least from her conspicuous table here in Rome, should be, though but once yearly, cast to the famishing dogs, under-trampled and bespitten-upon beneath the feet of the guests. And a moving sight in truth, this, of so many of the besotted blind restif and ready-to-perish Hebrews! now maternally brought—nay, (for He saith, 'Compel them to come in') haled, as it were, by the head and hair, and against their obstinate hearts, to partake of the heavenly grace. What awakening, what striving with tears, what working of a yeasty conscience! Nor was my lord wanting to himself on so apt an occasion: witness the abundance of conversions which did incontinently reward him: though not to my lord be altogether the glory."—*Diary by the Bishop's Secretary,* 1600.][2]

What the Jews really said, on thus being driven to church, was rather to this effect:—

I.

FEE, faw, fum! bubble and squeak!
Blessedest Thursday's the fat of the week.
Rumble and tumble, sleek and rough,
Stinking and savoury, smug and gruff,
Take the church-road, for the bell's due chime
Gives us the summons—'t is sermon time!

II.

Boh, here's Barnabas! Job, that's you?
Up stumps Solomon—bustling, too?
Shame, man! greedy beyond your years
To handsel the bishop's shaving-shears?

1 September 14—Commemorating Constantine's vision of the Cross in the sky at midday.

2 This is not meant to be taken as an actual extract from a real diary.

Fair play's a jewel! Leave friends in the lurch?
Stand on a line ere you start for the church!

III.

Higgledy, piggledy, packed we lie,
Rats in a hamper, swine in a stye,
Wasps in a bottle, frogs in a sieve,
Worms in a carcass, fleas in a sleeve.
Hist! square shoulders, settle your thumbs
And buzz for the bishop—here he comes.

IV.

Bow, wow, wow—a bone for the dog!
I liken his Grace to an acorned hog.
What, a boy at his side, with the bloom of a lass,
To help and handle my lord's hour-glass!
Did'st ever behold so lithe a chine?[1]
His cheek hath laps like a fresh-singed swine.

V.

Aaron's asleep—shove hip to haunch,
Or somebody deal him a dig in the paunch!
Look at the purse with the tassel and knob,
And the gown with the angel and thingumbob!
What's he at, quotha? reading his text!
Now you've his curtsey—and what comes next?

VI.

See to our converts—you doomed black dozen—
No stealing away—nor cog nor cozen![2]
You five, that were thieves, deserve it fairly;
You seven, that were beggars, will live less sparely;
You took your turn and dipped in the hat,
Got fortune—and fortune gets you; mind that![3]

---

1 The spine or back bone.

2 No tricks or flatteries.

3 This seems to show that the "black dozen" had received pardon for their crimes on condition of becoming Christians.

VII.

Give your first groan—compunction 's at work;
And soft! from a Jew you mount to a Turk.
Lo, Micah,—the selfsame beard on chin
He was four times already converted in!
Here's a knife, clip quick—it's a sign of grace—
Or he ruins us all with his hanging-face.

VIII.

Whom now is the bishop a-leering at?
I know a point where his text falls pat.
I'll tell him to-morrow, a word just now
Went to my heart and made me vow
I meddle no more with the worst of trades—
Let somebody else pay his serenades.

IX.

Groan altogether now, whee—hee—hee!
It 's a-work, it 's a-work, ah, woe is me!
It began, when a herd of us, picked and placed,
Were spurred through the Corso,[1] stripped to the waist;
Jew brutes, with sweat and blood well spent
To usher in worthily Christian Lent.

X.

It grew, when the hangman entered our bounds,
Yelled, pricked us out to his church like hounds:
It got to a pitch, when the hand indeed
Which gutted my purse, would throttle my creed:
And it overflows, when, to even the odd,
Men I helped to their sins help me to their God.[2]

1 A Roman street.

2 Such ill-treatment of the Jews was a common practice throughout the middle ages.

XI.

But now, while the scapegoats leave our flock,
And the rest sit silent and count the clock,
Since forced to muse the appointed time
On these precious facts and truths sublime,—
Let us fitly employ it, under our breath,
In saying Ben Ezra's Song of Death.

XII.

For Rabbi Ben Ezra, the night he died,
Called sons and sons' sons to his side,
And spoke, "This world has been harsh and strange;
Something is wrong: there needeth a change.
But what, or where? at the last or first?
In one point only we sinned, at worst.

XIII.

"The Lord will have mercy on Jacob yet,
And again in his border see Israel set.
When Judah beholds Jerusalem,
The stranger-seed shall be joined to them:
To Jacob's House shall the Gentiles cleave,
So the Prophet saith and his sons believe.

XIV.

"Ay, the children of the chosen race
Shall carry and bring them to their place:
In the land of the Lord shall lead the same,
Bondsmen and handmaids. Who shall blame,
When the slaves enslave the oppressed ones o'er
The oppressor triumph for evermore?

XV.

"God spoke, and gave us the word to keep:
Bade never fold the hands nor sleep
'Mid a faithless world,—at watch and ward,

Till Christ at the end relieve our guard.
By his servant Moses the watch was set:
Though near upon cock-crow, we keep it yet.

XV.

"Thou! if thou wast he, who at mid-watch came,
By the starlight, naming a dubious name!
And if, too heavy with sleep—too rash
With fear—O thou, if that martyr-gash
Fell on thee coming to take thine own,
And we gave the Cross, when we owed the Throne—

XVII.

"Thou art the Judge. We are bruised thus.
But, the Judgment over, join sides with us!
Thine too is the cause! and not more thine
Than ours, is the work of these dogs and swine,
Whose life laughs through and spits at their creed,
Who maintain thee in word, and defy thee in deed!

XVIII.

"We withstood Christ then? Be mindful how
At least we withstand Barabbas now!
Was our outrage sore? But the worst we spared,
To have called these—Christians, had we dared!
Let defiance to them pay mistrust of thee,
And Rome make amends for Calvary!

XIX.

"By the torture, prolonged from age to age,
By the infamy, Israel's heritage,
By the Ghetto's[1] plague, by the garb's[2] disgrace,

1 The Jewish quarter in Rome. Here the Jews were shut up under various restrictions, many extremely oppressive.

2 This was a special dress that they were compelled to wear.

By the badge of shame, by the felon's place,
By the branding-tool, the bloody whip,
And the summons to Christian fellowship,—

XX.

"We boast our proof that at least the Jew
Would wrest Christ's name from the Devil's crew.
Thy face took never so deep a shade
But we fought them in it, God our aid!
A trophy to bear, as we march, thy band
South, East, and on to the Pleasant Land!"

[*Pope Gregory XVI. abolished this bad business of the Sermon.*—R. B.]

[This poem was first published in *Men and Women,* 1855.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. What is the speaker's opinion of this compulsory attendance at church?
2. Have the Jews "dressed up" for the occasion?
3. Which one of the men mentioned, Stanza II, is anxious to attend?
4. What is the real reason for this zeal?
5. What is Solomon doing, that the speaker should utter the last two lines?
6. Where is the crowd, as Stanza III opens?
7. How much space has apparently been allowed these Jews to get settled in, for the sermon?
8. What does the language, in general, of this stanza show as to the mental attitude of the speaker towards the church-going?
9. What have you to say as to the atmosphere and decorum of this church corner?
10. Why should their thumbs need settling?
11. [St. IV.] Who is the dog? What is the bone that is being flung to him? Who is flinging it?
12. Then why does the speaker say, "Bow, wow, wow—"?
13. What expressions reveal the speaker's opinion of the bishop?
14. What, Stanza IV, does Aaron think of this business?

15. What expressions in this stanza show the speaker's opinion of the entire procedure?
16. How has the service been progressing from the last line of Stanza III to the last of Stanza V?
17. What had the "black dozen" been before their conversion?
18. *What* is it the speaker thinks that the thieves fairly deserve?
19. Since the beggars have become Christians what advantage may they look for?
20. What [St. VII] does the speaker think it is now about time to do?
21. What do you think of the sincerity with which Micah has been previously converted?
22. And what do you see, from the last word of the stanza, that he is again getting ready for?
23. What [Stanza VIII] was this "worst of trades" that the speaker seems to have meddled with for the bishop's benefit? (Note carefully the word *serenades.*)
24. What does the speaker think it is again time to do?
25. *What* is it that is "a-work"?
26. How then does the speaker utter the last four lines—seriously or ironically?
27. [St. X.] Who was charged with the task of getting the Jews to church?
28. What common practice is alluded to in line 4?
29. Whom does the speaker have in mind at line 6?
30. [St. XI.] Is the speaker one of the scape-goats?
31. Find two sarcastic expressions in this stanza.
32. How, Stanza XII, do the speaker's feelings change?
33. What hope of the Jews is alluded to in Stanzas XIII and XIV?
34. What distinctive belief of theirs is mentioned in Stanza XV?
35. Who is meant by "Thou," in Stanza XVI? What is signified by their being "too heavy with sleep" and by the "martyr-gash"?
36. [St. XVII, l. 3.] What cause is both Christ's and the Jews', as the speaker thinks?
37. Whom does he mean by Barabbas?
38. What outrage, worse than the Crucifixion, had the Jews not inflicted on Christ?
39. What does line 6 of this stanza mean?
40. Judging from the climax arrangement of Stanza XIX, what should you say was deemed the worst persecution of all?
41. Now what do you think, after all, of this unruly crowd?
42. What do you think of the extract from the diary of the Bishop's Secretary?

ANDREA DEL SARTO.[1]

(CALLED THE "FAULTLESS PAINTER.")

BUT do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?[2]
Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window, with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,[3]
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!

---

1 "Del Sarto" means "of the tailor," *del* being the sign of the genitive. The name, then, would be in English, "The Tailor's Andrew."

2 That is: "Will your hand take mine? Will it take mine tenderly?"

3 A small city near Florence in Italy.

—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There 's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything,—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone, you know)—but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There 's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape,
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now, looks the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example—turn your head—
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
—It is the thing, Love! so such things should be—
Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—

Do easily, too—what I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week;
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 't is easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that 's long past:
I do what many dream of, all their lives,
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter)—so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that 's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's[1] outline there is wrongly traced,

[1] A mountain visible from Fiesole.

His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray,
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate[1] who died five years ago.
('T is copied, George Vasari[2] sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art—for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!

[1] Raphael; so named from his birth-place, Urbino. He died in 1525.
[2] The biographer of both Raphael and Andrea.

Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God over-rules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, can not, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'T is safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared, not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau![1]
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,

[1] The palace of King Frances near Paris, whither Andrea had been summoned. This was seven years before the time of the poem.

All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—
'T is done and past; 't was right, my instinct said;
Too live[1] the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I 'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's[2] is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife—"
Men will excuse me.[3] I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo[4], his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,

[1] This is the adjective, not the verb.

[2] Raphael's. He lived in Rome from 1508 to 1520.

[3] The quotation is the direct object of "excuse." Men will excuse me by saying, "But still the other's Virgin was his wife."

[4] Michael Angelo.

Too lifted up in heart because of it)
[1]"Friend, there 's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's—and indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he 's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance so lost,—
Is, whether you 're—not grateful—but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there 's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?

[1] This is what Angelo said to Raphael, referring to Andrea.

That Cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those
loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work 's my ware, and what 's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What 's better and what 's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.

They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they
died;
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance.
Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more
chance—
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

[This poem was first published in *Men and Women,* 1855.

Andrea del Sarto was a painter famous for his great technical skill. In external matters, such as drawing, coloring, grouping, shading, his pictures are faultless. Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michael Angelo, his contemporaries, were, no doubt, the greatest painters in the whole history of art; yet, great as they were, Andrea surpassed them in technique. Indeed, his work has, in this respect, probably never been excelled.

But Andrea had no ideals, no inspiration, no enthusiasm; he could never rise to a high conception, could never respond inwardly to a lofty thought. This great discord in his personality was tragic; and it is this that forms the main theme of the present poem.

The portraits of Andrea reveal a thin, and probably a small man, with a sad, despondent face, and shy, almost frightened eyes. Lucrezia, who appears in most of his pictures, was a large, handsome, full-blooded woman. The union of two such opposite natures would necessarily be fraught with evil consequences, and this forms one of Browning's subordinate themes.

The external, historical, and biographical details are brought out, with sufficient clearness, in the poem itself. In reading it, the student should assume an easy, conversational tone, should study where to put his emphases, and should throw a sad, despondent quality into his voice.

Andrea del Sarto is one of the very best poems that Browning has written.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. Where was Andrea born? (See l. 190.)
2. Was he of wealthy parentage? (ll. 250-253.)
3. What social station did his family occupy?
4. What does his nickname mean?
5. What were his educational advantages? (ll. 189-190.)
6. How great skill in painting did he nevertheless acquire? (ll. 190-195, 60-66, 255-256.)
7. Was this like the ability of his contemporaries merely; or was it something beyond what they could ever hope to reach? (Compare the sub-title, the references under the last question, and lines 69-71, 115-116.)
8. Who were his three great contemporaries? (ll. 260-265.)
9. Which one is it he calls the Roman, the Urbinate?
10. What had Andrea long since gotten beyond? (l. 68.)
11. Whither had he, at one time, been summoned to do some work? (ll. 145-165.)
12. How did he value King Francis' friendship? (ll. 214-219, 247-249.)
13. Did he have Lucrezia with him at the time? (ll. 162-164.)
14. What relative of his wife's plays a part in the story?
15. What is his chief occupation? (ll. 221-222, 239.)
16. What pecuniary relations does he stand in to a friend of Lucrezia's? (ll. 234-239, 222.)

---

17. What have the two been doing, as the poem opens?
18. Emphasize the second word of line 1, and note what this shows you of Andrea's character.
19. What attitude has Lucrezia just assumed, and why?
20. What hour is it, and where are they?
21. What does Lucrezia do, line 4?
22. Whither had she been looking, and why?
23. What does Andrea, line 9, try to make Lucrezia do?
24. What description of Andrea's personality is contained in line 11?
25. Find some expressions, before this, which show that Andrea had great skill, as a painter.
26. What little kindness does he beg of his wife? Is this so very much to ask?
27. What does his manner of doing this show us of their life and character?
28. Emphasize "might," in line 18, and note what this shows.
29. What is it that Andrea feels he needs, and does not get, to make him work cheerfully?
30. What does line 20 mean?
31. Where do we find an indication that they are poor? Is this Andrea's fault, do you think?
32. Where do we see that Andrea has an artist's eye?
33. Find some expressions showing that Lucrezia is beautiful.
34. What causes Andrea's rapture about the moon?

35. How does Lucrezia take this? (l. 33.)
36. How is Andrea's favorite color characteristic of his life?
37. What expression, in the next line and in line 39, suggests the same?
38. What hint at their past life is given in line 38?
39. What do you find to show that Andrea might have been a great landscape painter?
40. Find two expressions, up to line 50, that corroborate the thought of questions 36 and 37.
41. What negligence of Lucrezia's causes the exclamation of line 46?
42. What is there in lines 51-53 that corroborates the thought of questions 36, 37, and 40?
43. How is Lucrezia behaving, to judge from line 53?
44. What indication of her character in the following few lines?
45. What state of mind, in regard to his art, do Andrea's words, lines 58-76, indicate?
46. Where, in these lines, do you find another hint at Lucrezia's indifference?
47. If his skill is so superior to the ability of his contemporaries, how can he (l. 78) say that their "less" is more than he possesses?
48. What is the "truer light of God" that burns in them?
49. What does he mean when he says that their brain is vexed, beating, stuffed, and stopped up?
50. What does Andrea, in describing himself, say he is; and what, by implication, does he say he lacks?
51. What does he mean when he says that *their* works drop groundward, while *his* are nearer heaven?
52. What place that is open to Raphael, Angelo, and da Vinci, can he not enter? What does he mean by this?
53. Why can they not tell the world their visions?
54. How are lines 90-91 characteristic of Andrea's personality?
55. Was it *reach*, or was it *grasp* (l. 96) that Andrea had in full perfection?
56. What is there in the next lines that corroborates the thought of questions 36, 37, 40, 42?
57. What would the ability of the "other" (l. 102) have needed to be, in order that he and Andrea combined might have "o'erlooked the world"?
58. What is the artistic rank of the man Andrea now criticizes, and what is it he finds wrong in the picture?
59. With what confidence does he speak of his own skill?
60. Then what does line 113 mean?
61. What reproach of Lucrezia does Andrea next utter?
62. Judging by line 120, how shall you say she takes it?
63. In what respect is Lucrezia not a fitting wife for him?
64. What does he feel she should have always urged?

65. What note of despondent fatalism comes next?
66. Yet *does* he, upon second thought, think Lucrezia could have helped him; where does he feel that inspiration must, after all, come from?
67. In what sense (l. 140) is Andrea a "half-man"? (Compare question 57.)
68. What sad commentary on life just before this?
69. What had Andrea done, that the Paris lords should "pass and look aside"?
70. *Whose* face was it "beyond in the background"?
71. What makes Andrea so quickly change his tone in line 166? (Compare question 62.)
72. What do you again find, that supplements questions 36, 37, 40, 42, 56, 57, 67?
73. Whom had Andrea always used as the model for his Madonnas? (Compare line 23.)
74. What does he mean when he says Raphael's Virgin is "better when you pray"?
75. Considering the reputation of Angelo and Raphael, what should you say as to the value of this praise that Andrea tells of?
76. What does Lucrezia, at about line 199, say? What does this show of her character as a wife?
77. How can Andrea presume to meddle with the work of an artist like Raphael?
78. Why does he rub out his alterations of Raphael's picture?
79. Why does Lucrezia smile? Does Andrea perceive the real reason?
80. What does line 207 tell us of her?
81. What does it seem they have done with King Francis' money?
82. What change now occurs in the situation?
83. What is there morally improper in what Lucrezia prepares to do?
84. What does Andrea suddenly see was the reason for her smiling? How does he take it?
85. What does it seem, from lines 199 and 203, that he has never had from his wife?
86. What has Lucrezia been calling Andrea's musings?
87. What does line 240 tell us about Lucrezia? Do you think Andrea tells the truth about himself in this sentence?
88. How is Lucrezia behaving since the cousin's appearance, to judge from lines 236 and 241?
89. Find a touch of despondency in the next few lines.
90. In what way is line 254 modest?
91. Emphasize "good" in line 255 and note what the sentence thus comes to mean.
92. Find another touch of sadness.

93. What does Andrea, at the close, give as the reason for the continued superiority of his contemporaries?
94. What do you infer were Andrea's spiritual, *and physical,* characteristics?
95. And what Lucrezia's?
96. To what extent is she to be blamed for not feeling satisfied with Andrea?
97. Do you think Andrea accounts fully for his life, in line 51?
98. What does the word "faultless" of the sub-title mean, and what does it not mean?

FRA LIPPO LIPPI.[1]

I AM poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face.
Zooks, what 's to blame? you think you see a monk!
What, 't is past midnight, and you go the rounds,
And here you catch me at an alley's end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?
The Carmine 's[2] my cloister: hunt it up,
Do,—harry out, if you must show your zeal,
Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,
And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,
Weke, weke, that 's crept to keep him company!
Aha, you know your betters! Then, you'll take
Your hand away that 's fiddling on my throat,
And please to know me likewise. Who am I?
Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend
Three streets off—he 's a certain . . . how d' ye call?
Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,[3]
I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! you were best!

---

1 The painter's full name was Filippo di Tommaso Lippi. *Fra* means "brother"—a title applied to monks.

2 A Carmelite monastery in Florence.

3 The great statesman and patron of art and learning in Florence—called the "Father of his Country."

Remember and tell me, the day you 're hanged,
How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!
But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves
Pick up a manner nor discredit you:
Zooks, are we pilchards,[1] that they sweep the streets
And count fair prize what comes into their net?
He 's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.
Lord, I 'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go
Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
Of the munificent house that harbors me
(And many more beside, lads! more beside!)
And all 's come square again. I 'd like his face—
His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
With the pike and lantern,—for the slave that holds
John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
With one hand ("Look you, now," as who should say)[2]
And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!
It 's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,
A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!
Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.
What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,
You know them and they take you? like enough!
I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—
'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
Let 's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.
Here's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands
To roam the town and sing out carnival,
And I 've been three weeks shut within my mew,
A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
And saints again. I could not paint all night—

[1] A worthless kind of fish.

[2] That is: as if he would say, "Look you, now."

Ouf! I leaned out of the[1] window for fresh air.
There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whifts of song,—
Flower o' the broom,[2]
Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!
Flower o' the quince,
I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?
Flower o' the thyme—and so on. Round they went.
Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter
Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight,—three slim shapes,
And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir, flesh and blood,
That 's all I 'm made of! Into shreds it went.[3]
Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed-furniture—a dozen knots,
There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so dropped,
And after them. I came up with the fun
Hard by Saint Laurence,[4] hail fellow, well met,—
Flower o' the rose,
If I 've been merry, what matter who knows?
And so as I was stealing back again
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
Ere I rise up to-morrow and go work
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast
With his great round stone to subdue the flesh.
You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see!

---

1 The American edition omits "the."

2 A peasant song of Italy, consisting of two parts. First the flower is mentioned in four syllables, and the hearer is then required to invent a reply about love, in ten syllables, that shall rhyme. We must assume that Lippo, throughout the poem, sings these passages.

3 It is related that de Medici, knowing Lippo's propensities, locked him up to keep him at work.

4 The famous church of San Lorenzo in Florence.

Though your eye twinkles still, you shake your head—
Mine 's shaved—a monk, you say—the sting 's in that!
If Master Cosimo announced himself,
Mum 's the word naturally; but a monk!
Come, what am I a beast for? tell us, now!
I was a baby when my mother died
And father died and left me in the street.
I starved there, God knows how, a year or two
On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and shucks,
Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,
My stomach doubled me up and down I went.
Old Aunt Lapaccia[1] trussed me with one hand,
(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew)
And so along the wall, over the bridge,
By the straight cut to the convent. Six words there,
While I stood munching my first bread that month:
"So, boy, you 're minded," quoth the good fat father
Wiping his own mouth, 't was refection-time,—
"To quit this very miserable world?
Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of bread?" thought I;
By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;
I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-house,
Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici
Have given their hearts to—all at eight years old.
Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,
'T was not for nothing—the good bellyful,
The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
And day-long blessed idleness beside!

[1] Fra Lippo's aunt, in fact.

"Let 's see what the urchin 's fit for"[1]—that came
next.
Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
Such a to-do! They tried me with their books:
Lord, they 'd have taught me Latin in pure waste!
Flower o' the clove,
All the Latin I construe is, "amo" I love!
But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
Eight years together, as my fortune was,
Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he[2] desires,
And who will curse or kick him[2] for his pains,—
Which gentleman processional and fine,
Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
Will wink and let him[2] lift a plate and catch
The droppings of the wax to sell again,
Or holla for the Eight[3] and have him[2] whipped,—
How say I?—nay, which dog bites, which lets drop
His bone from the heap of offal in the street,—
Why, soul and sense of him[2] grow sharp alike,
He[2] learns the look of things, and none the less
For admonition from the hunger-pinch
I had a store of such remarks,[4] be sure,
Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.
I drew men's faces on my copy-books,
Scrawled them within the antiphonary's[5] marge,
Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,
Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's
And made a string of pictures of the world
Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,

---

1 A subsequent remark of the "good, fat father" in respect to the boy's career.

2 These pronouns refer to "boy" in line 112. Lippo, of course, means himself.

3 The city magistrates.

4 That is, observations.

5 Song-book's.

On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks
looked black.
"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out, d' ye say?
In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
What if at last we get our man of parts,
We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese[1]
And Preaching Friars,[1] to do our church up fine
And put the front on it that ought to be!"
And hereupon he bade me daub away.
Thank you! my head being crammed, the walls a
blank,
Never was such prompt disemburdening.
First, every sort of monk, the black and white,[2]
I drew them, fat and lean: then, folk at church,
From good old gossips waiting to confess
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends,—
To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there
With the little children round him in a row
Of admiration, half for his beard and half
For that white anger of his victim's son
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
Signing himself with the other because of Christ
(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this[3]
After the passion of a thousand years)
Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head,
(Which the intense eyes looked through) came at
eve
On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,
Her pair of ear-rings and a bunch of flowers
(The brute took growling), prayed, and so was
gone.

---

1 Monks of rival monasteries.

2 That is: the order of monks wearing a black robe, and the Carmelites, who wore a white robe.

3 The arm making the sign of the cross.

I painted them all, then cried " 'T is ask and have;
Choose, for more 's ready!"—laid the ladder flat,
And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall.
The monks closed in a circle and praised loud
Till checked, taught what to see and not to see,
Being simple bodies,—"That's the very man!
Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog!
That woman 's like the Prior's niece who comes
To care about his asthma: it 's the life!"
But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and funked;
Their betters took their turn to see and say:
The Prior and the learned pulled a face
And stopped all that in no time. "How? what 's here?
Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! it 's devil's-game!
Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there 's such a thing as flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men—
Man's soul, and it 's a fire, smoke . . . no, its not . . .
It 's vapour done up like a new-born babe—
(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)
It 's . . . well, what matters talking, it 's the soul!
Give us no more of body than shows soul!
Here 's Giotto,[1] with his Saint a-praising God,
That sets us praising,[1]—why not stop with him?
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head
With wonder at lines, colours, and what not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms?

[1] A famous painter of the century before Lippo. As a matter of fact, the pictures of this school set us smiling.

Rub all out, try at it a second time!
Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts,
She 's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would say,—
Who went and danced and got men's heads cut off!
Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?
A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go further
And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white
When what you put for yellow 's simply black,
And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks naught.
Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order?[1] Take the prettiest face,
The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint—is it so pretty
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,
And then add soul and heighten them threefold?
Or say there's beauty with no soul at all—
(I never saw it—put the case the same—)
If you get simple beauty and naught else,
You get about the best thing God invents:
That 's somewhat: and you 'll find the soul you have missed,
Within yourself, when you return him thanks.
"Rub all out!" Well, well, there 's my life, in short,
And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I 'm grown a man no doubt, I 've broken bounds:[2]

---

[1] The left foot, or first step, means painting the outward body; the right foot, or second step, signifies putting in the expression, feeling and character, which is what Lippo means by "soul."

[2] That is, broken the rules of the monastery.

You should not take a fellow eight years old
And make him swear to never kiss the girls.
I 'm my own master, paint now as I please—
Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!
Lord, it 's fast holding by the rings in front—
Those great rings serve more purposes than just
To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!
And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes
Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still—"It 's art's decline, my son!
You 're not of the true painters, great and old;
Brother Angelico 's[1] the man, you 'll find;
Brother Lorenzo[2] stands his single peer:
Fag on at flesh, you 'll never make the third!"
Flower o' the pine,
You keep your mistr . . . manners, and I 'll stick to mine!
I 'm not the third, then: bless us, they must know!
Don't you think they 're the likeliest to know,
They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage,
Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint
To please them—sometimes do and sometimes don't;
For, doing most, there 's pretty sure to come
A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints—
A laugh, a cry, the business of the world—
(*Flower o' the peach,*
Death for us all, and his own life for each!)
And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over,
The world and life 's too big to pass for a dream,
And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
And play the fooleries you catch me at,

---

1 A painter of the generation preceding and partly contemporary with Lippo—who was an idealist and Lippo's direct opposite.

2 One of the Camaldolese mentioned above. Like Angelico, an idealist, and Lippo's opposite.

In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at grass
After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,
Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.
What would men have? Do they like grass[1] or no—
May they or may n't they? all I want 's the thing
Settled for ever one way. As it is,
You tell too many lies and hurt yourself:
You don't like what you only like too much,
You do like what, if given at your word,
You find abundantly detestable.
For me, I think I speak as I was taught;
I always see the garden and God there
A-making man's wife: and, my lesson learned,
The value and significance of flesh,
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me: I 'm a beast I know.
But see, now—why, I see as certainly
As that the morning-star 's about to shine,
What will hap some day. We 've a youngster here
Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares and let's no atom drop:
His name is Guidi—he 'll not mind the monks—
They call him Hulking Tom,[1] he lets them talk—
He picks my practice up—he 'll paint apace,
I hope so—though I never live so long,
I know what 's sure to follow. You be judge!
You speak no Latin more than I, belike;
However, you 're my man, you 've seen the world
—The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,

[1] By grass, Lippo means nocturnal escapades, like his own.

[2] Tommaso Guidi, according to Browning and his source, Vasari, a pupil of Lippo's, but really his master.

Changes, surprises,—and God made it all!
—For what? Do you feel thankful, ay or no,
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman, child,
These are the frame to? What 's it all about?
To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,
Wondered at? oh, this last of course!—you say.
But why not do as well as say,—paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works—paint any one, and count it crime
To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His works
Are here already; nature is complete:
Suppose you reproduce her—(which you can't)
There 's no advantage! you must beat her, then."
For, don't you mark? we 're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;[1]
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though! How much more
If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,
Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,
It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world 's no blot for us
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
"Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"

1 And thus it comes that we say certain colors or shades in a picture are unnatural—we have simply never noticed them in nature.

Strikes in the Prior: "when your meaning's plain
It does not say to folk—remember matins,
Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what 's best,
A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.
I painted a Saint Laurence[1] six months since
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style:
"How looks my painting, now the scaffold's down?"
I ask a brother: "Hugely," he returns—
"Already not one phiz of your three slaves
Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,
But 's scratched and prodded to our heart's content,
The pious people have so eased their own
With coming to say prayers there in a rage:
We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.
Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd—
Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

—That is—you'll not mistake an idle word
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, Got wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night which turns
The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the Church knows! don't misreport me, now!
It's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself;
And hearken how I plot to make amends.
I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece
. . . There 's for you! Give me six months, then go, see
Something in Sant' Ambrogio's![2] Bless the nuns!

---

1 Broiled to death on a gridiron, A. D. 258.

2 St. Ambrose's—a nunnery at Florence.

They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint
God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,[1]
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet
As puff on puff of grated orris-root
When ladies crowd to church in midsummer.
And then i' the front, of course a saint or two—
Saint John, because he saves the Florentines,
Saint Ambrose,[2] who puts down in black and white
The convent's friends and gives them a long day,
And Job, I must have him there past mistake,
The man of Uz (and Us without the z,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these
Secured at their devotion, up shall come
Out of corner when you least expect,
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I—[3]
Mazed, motionless, and moon-struck—I'm the man!
Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear?
I, caught up with my monk's things by mistake,
My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,
I, in this presence, this pure company!
Where 's a hole, where 's a corner for escape?
Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing
Forward, puts out a soft palm—"Not so fast!"
—Addresses the celestial presence, "nay—
He made you and devised you, after all,
Though he 's none of you! Could Saint John there, draw—
His camel-hair make up a painting-brush?
We come to brother Lippo for all that,

1 This picture is owned by the Florence Academy of Fine Arts.

2 A great churchman of the fourth century—Archbishop of Milan.

3 It was not unusual for the old painters to put themselves into their pictures, in some humble relation.

Iste perfecit opus!" So, all smile—
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face
Under the cover of a hundred wings
Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you 're gay
And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,
Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off
To some safe bench behind, not letting go
The palm of her, the little lily thing
That spoke the good word for me in the nick,
Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say.
And so all 's saved for me, and for the church
A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!
Your hand, sir, and good-bye: no lights, no lights!
The street 's hushed, and I know my own way back,
Don't fear me! There 's the gray beginning.
Zooks!

[This poem first appeared in *Men and Women*, 1855.

In Italy art was the servant of religion, with the duty of stimulating piety by portraying the soul. But the body had always been looked upon as the antithesis to the soul and was therefore despised and neglected. Moreover, no one seemed to have a clear conception of what the soul was; hence the painters supposed that by making the body degraded and hideous, they would show the soul to be beautiful and noble. The result was hundreds of lean and cadaverous saints, hundreds of woe-begone figures of Christ on the Cross. These pictures are, as a rule, devoid of expression, feeling and character; we are made to smile at the grotesque idealism which they strive to set forth.

About the middle of the XV century, just before the birth of Raphael and his contemporaries, a reaction against this mode began to set in. It was admitted as before that it is the first duty of art to portray the soul; but it came to be seen that it is the body which gives it expression—that it is from the lineaments of the face, from the attitudes, from the clothes, the hands and feet, the hair and beard that we gain our conception of what the soul is like.

It was Fra Lippo Lippi who headed this movement. He was a man of great mental vigor and of an independent personality. He first saw that an artist must get the details of expression, of attitude, and so forth, from a close study of real men and things. He delighted in life. He possessed the artist's ability to see the character—the soul—lying hidden beneath the outward details. It is his effort to justify his beliefs and deeds, against the conservatism of his age, that forms the theme of the poem.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. What has just happened? (Note lines 12 and 13.)
2. Where, a few lines farther on, do you find the same occurrence mentioned?
3. With what object do the guards, line 2, clap their torches to Lippo's face?
4. What kind of an adventure has Lippo been on?
5. What word of line 3 shows that this adventure is deemed especially bad?
6. Yet does Lippo, line 1, care at all to conceal his identity? What trait of character is thus shown from the very first?
7. What manner does Lippo assume, as he says the first half of line 7?
8. What causes him to utter the first half of line 12 in the way he does?
9. What question is asked him, line 14?
10. What is the effect of the great man's name on the guards, as shown by Lippo's words in the second part of line 18?
11. What rank does the man apparently hold to whom Lippo turns in line 21?
12. Where do you find the first indication of Lippo's artistic instincts?
13. Is this art of his dreamy and mystical, or does it delight in real men and things?
14. What does the officer do at line 26?
15. What trait of character does the first half of line 27 reveal?
16. With what manner does Lippo bestow his quarter florin?
17. But what impressive suggestion does he take care to repeat?
18. Where do you again see that Lippo is an artist?
19. What does the officer say at line 39?
20. Was this the first of Lippo's escapades?
21. How does the officer regard them?
22. How is Lippo's keen perception of character shown in his attitude toward the officer?
23. What account is now given of the events that have preceded the opening of the poem?
24. What word, line 51, do you think Lippo especially emphasizes?
25. What do you think was Lippo's opinion of his saints, to judge from line 48?
26. Where, towards the end of his account, do you see the same?
27. Where do you find a second reference to the thought of question 5?

28. What kind of art subjects do you think Lippo delights in?
29. What biographical details does he now give about himself?
30. What bit of good-humored irony do you find at about line 100?
31. What experiences did the monks at first have with Lippo?
32. How did Lippo acquire his first knowledge of faces and expressions?
33. How did he make his first attempts to portray them?
34. Did the prior or the monks have the best eye for the boy's abilities?
35. Where is there another touch of good-humored sarcasm in reference to Lippo's first paintings?
36. What do you think of his picture representing the murderer at the altar's foot?
37. What great contrast in it of innocence to guilt?
38. What instance of devotion in it?
39. What instance of devotion unappreciated?
40. How does Lippo criticize the conventional picture of Christ on the Cross that he has put into his own painting? To what, by implication, was that particular face of the Savior blind?
41. What did the monks think of the painting?
42. Was this verdict spontaneous or deliberate?
43. Was it true or false?
44. What do you think of the verdict passed by the "Prior and the learned?"
45. Did the Prior know what the soul is?
46. How much sense was there in his commands to "paint the souls of men"?
47. How was he himself, in spite of his theories, caught by a portion of the picture?
48. What is Lippo's opinion of the usual ways in which artists have tried to paint the soul?
49. Was his picture devoid of soul?
50. What does the enthusiasm of the monks say on this point?
51. Is the command of the prior to paint soul, without painting anything that shall show feeling or expression or character, capable of execution?
52. Can a painter paint "soul"; or can he portray only some special manifestation of the soul, as purity, villainy, hypocrisy, etc?
53. What trait of Lippo's character is shown in line 209?
54. But going a step further (line 219), where is the soul,—in the paint on the canvas, or in the beholder?
55. What note of sadness is now heard?
56. And what note of humorous sarcasm?
57. What is the old criticism Lippo fancies he hears?
58. How does he take it?

59. What sarcasm in lines 240-241?
60. Find a remark corroborating the thought of question 25.
61. What is Lippo's opinion of the moral strictures preached by men?
62. What especially good thing does he say in excuse of his amatory escapades?
63. What, line 277, is the most promising trait in Guidi?
64. Where is there a further slur on the "learning" of the monks?
65. Where do we again see Lippo's great love for the world, for life, for men and things?
66. What should you, yourself, answer to the questions in lines 290-292?
67. What common obtuse criticism of painting does Lippo now quote?
68. How does he next very keenly and truthfully answer this?
69. How does he at once give the officer a practical proof of the truth in his remark?
70. What does line 315 mean?
71. What sarcasm follows?
72. How did Lippo's picture of St. Laurence suffering martyrdom show his greatness?
73. What lines, however, ridicule the whole thing?
74. How does Lippo feel about his bold speech, line 335?
75. What action accompanies the first half of line 345?
76. What does Lippo feel he must put into the picture he next plans? (Compare questions 25 and 60.)
77. Why can he not leave Job out?
78. What indication of belief in himself, and approval of his course comes out in the description of this picture?
79. What characteristic little adventure does he propose to put in?
80. Anything humorous in line 387?
81. What politeness does the officer at the close wish to show Lippo?
82. What is contained in the last word?

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER.[1]

THE rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me—she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me forever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain:

[1] The following two poems should be studied together and compared; each represents an unsuccessful lover. Questions designed to facilitate comparison have been added at the close of *The Last Ride*.

So, she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes
  Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
  Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
  Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
  In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
  I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee,
  I warily oped her lids: again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
  About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
  I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still:
  The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
  That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: She guessed not how
  Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
  And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word!

[This poem was first published, 1836, in a London magazine called *The Monthly Repository*. It stood, together with *Johannes Agricola in Meditation*, under the title *Madhouse Cells*, the present piece being *No. II, Porphyria*. This would seem to show that it is to be looked upon as the monologue of a madman, recounting, perhaps, the events that unbalanced his mind. Originally it appeared in five-line stanzas.]

QUESTIONS.

1. What were the conditions outside this house?
2. What was the condition of the man's mind?
3. Who was Porphyria?
4. What did she do first on entering?
5. What did she do next?
6. What does this reveal concerning her?
7. Why had the man allowed the room to become cold and cheerless?
8. What was Porphyria's station in life? (ll. 22-27.)
9. What were the "vainer ties" she could not dissever?
10. What was the pride she could not free her love from?
11. What was the man's social station?
12. Why was his heart "fit to break"?
13. Where had she come from and why?
14. How was she dressed? (ll. 17 and 27.)
15. What was the man doing that he (l. 15) should fail to answer her? (Compare ll. 31-32.)
16. What did she know from this?
17. Then what did she do? (from line 15, on.)
18. What was it that had compelled her to come to him?
19. What did the man at last know?
20. But considering their different social stations and Porphyria's weakness, what would their future life, of necessity, be?
21. Then what did he think it best to do?
22. Why did she not resist?
23. Which of Porphyria's two lives—that lived in society, or that spent with him—was her true one?
24. What then did he wish to forestall by his act?
25. What did he seem to be especially glad over?
26. What does the fact that her eyes laughed show? (Compare question 22.)
27. What made her cheek once more blush?
28. What were her "utmost will" and her "darling one wish" that had at last been granted?
29. What very pathetic act was he compelled to perform?
30. How can he say that her head droops on his shoulder *still?*
31. What does Browning seem to insinuate by making the speaker say, *God had kept still?*
32. The original title of this poem was *Porphyria* only. Do you think this better than the present heading?

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER.

I.

I SAID—Then, dearest, since 't is so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be—
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

II.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

III.

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening star's at once—

And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew,[1] your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

IV.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind[2]
Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with[3] a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?[4]
And here we are riding, she and I.

V.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought,—All[5] labour, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,

---

1 Supply the word "that" here, and the sense will be plainer.
2 This participial double phrase modifies scroll.
3 "With," here, means against.
4 Had befallen.
5 That is: all persons, everybody.

This present of theirs[1] with the hopeful past!
I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

VI.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?[2]
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who[3] can reach.
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?[4]
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.[5]
My riding is better, by their leave.

VII.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only;[6] you expressed[7]
You hold things beautiful the best,
And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.
'T is something, nay 't is much; but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rhyme?
Sing, riding 's a joy! For me, I ride.

---

1 The antecedent of this pronoun is "All," above.

2 What will was ever free and unhampered by the cares of life?

3 The one, who.

4 What does it all amount to; what reward is there in it?

5 The stones of Westminster Abbey; here England's great men are buried and their deeds inscribed. Browning, himself, lies buried here.

6 "What we felt only" is the object of both "beat" and "tell."

7 You expressed the opinion that beautiful things are the best.

VIII.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
A score of years to Art,[1] her slave,
And that 's your Venus, whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn![2]
You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown gray
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend
"Greatly his opera's strains intend[3]
But in music we know how fashions end!"
I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

IX.

Who knows what 's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being[4]—had I signed the bond—
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such?[5] Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest.
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

X.

And yet—she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be that, fair and strong,
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,

---

1 Insert "being" here and the sense will be plainer.

2 Brook.

3 His opera's strains aim at, or intend, great things.

4 Had fate proposed that bliss should here complete or fulfill his existence.

5 Such goal or glory-garland; or perhaps "bliss to die with."

We, fixed so, ever should so abide?[1]
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And heaven just prove[2] that I and she
Ride, ride together, forever ride! 110

[This poem was first published in *Men and Women*, 1855. This ride that the speaker takes with his lady signifies the abiding memory of her and the inspiring love for her, which, though unrequited, will never lose its influence over him or fade away.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. What does the speaker mean "is so"?
2. What is his fate?
3. What had been written?
4. How great is his love?
5. What hope had she given?
6. What does the word "then," in line 1, show? Had the conversation been long or short? Does he consider it final; or does he hope to resume it?
7. What does "at length" tell us of the speaker's existence hitherto?
8. How does he, in spite of his fate, feel towards his lady?
9. How does he, as we see from line 8, wish her to leave him?
10. What will he be content with?
11. What will this be to him through the future?
12. What does line 14 show us of the lady's nature?
13. What is she debating in her mind, line 15?
14. How is this hesitation affecting him?
15. What causes the blood to replenish him again?
16. What, by inference, have his feelings been, just before?
17. What was his "last thought"?
18. What does he almost hope will happen? Why should he hope this?
19. If this should happen, what would he be spared?
20. What words [St. III] descriptive of the cloud, are also descriptive of his lady?

---

1 What if heaven consist in this: viz., that being fair and strong, at life's best, we should so abide, forever!

2 And heaven prove to be just this: that I and she ride in spirit forever.

21. As they "begin to ride," how is he affected by the fresh wind?
22. What has he already gotten free from?
23. What spirit breathes through line 38?
24. What thought does he next take comfort from?
25. What is the worst that might have befallen? How, at least, does his lady *not* feel?
26. What does he, at the opening of Stanza V, comfort himself with?
27. Is the thought of lines 50-51 true?
28. What, then, are the "other regions" that his spirit is, for the first time, seeing?
29. What answer should you, yourself, give to the questions in lines 56-59?
30. What spheres of greatness does the speaker now review, up to Stanza IX?
31. What do they all teach him?
32. What does the life of the statesman and the soldier, in the end, amount to?
33. In what way does the speaker think he is better off?
34. What, after all his toil, does the poet fail to gain?
35. Has the speaker reached it?
36. What do you now begin to see that this riding with the lady signifies?
37. What is the sculptor's fate also—and the musician's?
38. Read the latter half of line 88 in a tone of exultation and see what this brings out in answer to question 36.
39. How should you, yourself, answer the question in line 89?
40. Suppose one should here in this life reach the highest of everything, how would that be unsatisfactory?
41. In what does happiness consist—in reaching out after things hoped for, or in gaining them?
42. Would the garland of glory, once obtained, be such any more?
43. What is the speaker's reason for thinking that earth should not be too good?
44. What does the speaker, Stanza X, say heaven is?
45. What do you now clearly see that this ride means?
46. Who will the speaker have with him to his death-day?

---

1. Comparing this lover with Porphyria's, which do you see has the greater force of character?
2. Which loves the more?
3. Which controls the passion and turns it to good?
4. Which in reality never parts from his lady?
5. Which proceeds on the principle of self-sacrifice?
6. With which lover is the good of the beloved object paramount?

7. Which of the two is loved in return and is, consequently, the one that should be content?
8. Which looks on love as implying duties; and which, as implying only rights?
9. Which can rejoice in love for its own sake?
10. Which of the two women exercises the more lasting power over her lover?

[Browning has written a unmber of other love poems. The student is referred to *Evelyn Hope, Christina, By the Fireside, Love in a Life, Life in a Love,* and, above all, to *One Word More.*]

THE HERETIC'S TRAGEDY.

A MIDDLE-AGE INTERLUDE.[1]

ROSA MUNDI; SEU, FULCITE ME FLORIBUS. A CONCEIT OF MASTER GYSBRECHT, CANON-REGULAR OF SAINT JODOCUS-BY-THE-BAR, YPRES CITY. CANTUQUE, *Virgilius.* AND HATH OFTEN BEEN SUNG AT HOCK-TIDE AND FESTIVALS. GAVISUS ERAM, *Jessides.*

(It would seem to be a glimpse from the burning of Jacques du Bourg-Molay, at Paris, A. D. 1314; as distorted by the refraction from Flemish brain to brain, during the course of a couple of centuries.)

I.

PREADMONISHETH THE ABBOT DEODAET.

THE Lord, we look to once for all,
  Is the Lord we should look at, all at once;
He knows not to vary, saith Saint Paul,
  Nor the shadow of turning, for the nonce.
See him no other than as he is!
  Give both the infinitudes their due—

---

[1] An interlude was a short musical or theatrical performance, interposed between the parts of a larger entertainment. The present specimen is supposed to be directed by the abbot and to be performed by a leader and a choir.

Infinite mercy, but, I wis,
As infinite a justice too.

[*Organ: plagal-cadence.*[1]]

As infinite a justice too.

II.

ONE SINGETH.

John, Master of the Temple of God,
Falling to sin the Unknown Sin,
What he bought of Emperor Aldabrod,[2]
He sold it to Sultan Saladin:[3]
Till, caught by Pope Clement, a-buzzing there,
Hornet-prince of the mad wasps' hive,
And clipt of his wings in Paris square,
They bring him now to be burned alive.

[*And wanteth there grace of lute or clavicithern,*[4] *ye shall say to confirm him who singeth*—[5]

We bring John now to be burned alive.

III.

In the midst is a goodly gallows built;
'Twixt fork and fork, a stake is stuck;
But first they set divers tumbrils a-tilt,
Make a trench all round with the city muck;
Inside they pile log upon log, good store;
Fagots not few, blocks great and small,
Reach a man's mid-thight, no less, no more,—
For they mean he should roast in the sight of all.

---

1 A form of mediaeval church music.

2 A fictitious name, but intended for one of the emperors at Constantinople, who were Christians.

3 The famous Saladin of Scott's novel, *The Talisman*.

4 A zither with keys.

5 The bracketed remarks throughout the poem are stage directions, intended to aid the performers.

CHORUS.

We mean he should roast in the sight of all.

IV.

Good sappy bavins that kindle forthwith;
  Billets that blaze substantial and slow;
Pine-stump split deftly, dry as pith;
  Larch-heart that chars to a chalk-white glow:
Then up they hoist me John in a chafe,
  Sling him fast like a hog to scorch,
Spit in his face, then leap back safe,
  Sing "Laudes" and bid clap-to the torch.

CHORUS.

Laus Deo—who bids clap-to the torch.[1]

V.

John of the Temple, whose fame so bragged,
  Is burning alive in Paris square!
How can he curse, if his mouth is gagged?
  Or wriggle his neck, with a collar there?
Or heave his chest, which a band goes round?
  Or threat with his fist, since his arms are spliced?
Or kick with his feet, now his legs are bound?
  —Thinks John, I will call upon Jesus Christ.
[*Here one crosseth himself.*

VI.

Jesus Christ—John had bought and sold,
  Jesus Christ—John had eaten and drunk;
To him, the Flesh meant silver and gold.
  (*Salva reverentia.*[2])
Now it was, "Savior, bountiful lamb,
  I have roasted thee Turks, though men roast me!

---

1 That is: it is God who bids clap to the torch.

2 Saving reverence—an apology. This some one says, horrified at the mention of Christ's Body in such a connection.

See thy servant, the plight wherein I am!
Art thou a saviour? Save thou me!"

CHORUS.

'T is John the mocker cries, "Save thou me!"

VII.

Who maketh God's menace an idle word?
—Saith, it no more means what is proclaims,
Than a damsel's threat to her wanton bird?—
For she too prattles of ugly names.
—Saith, he knoweth but one thing—what he knows?
That God is good and the rest is breath;
Why else is the same styled Sharon's rose?
Once a rose, ever a rose, he saith.

CHORUS.

Oh, John shall yet find a rose, he saith!

VIII.

Alack, there be roses and roses, John!
Some, honeyed of taste like your leman's tongue:
Some, bitter; for why? (roast gayly on!)
Their tree struck root in devil's dung.
When Paul once reasoned of righteousness
And of temperance and of judgment to come,
Good Felix trembled, he could no less:
John, snickering, crook'd his wicked thumb.

CHORUS.

What cometh to John of the wicked thumb?

IX.

Ha, ha, John plucketh now at his rose
To rid himself of a sorrow at heart!

Lo,—petal on petal, fierce rays unclose;
Anther on anther, sharp spikes outstart;
And with blood for dew, the bosom boils;
And a gust of sulphur is all its smell;
And lo, he is horribly in the toils
Of a coal-black giant flower of hell!

CHORUS.

What maketh heaven, That maketh hell.

X.

So, as John called now, through the fire amain,
On the Name, he had cursed with, all his life—
To the Person, he bought and sold again—
For the Face, with his daily buffets rife —
Feature by feature It took its place:
And his voice, like a mad dog's choking bark,
At the steady whole of the Judge's face—
Died. Forth John's soul flared into the dark.

SUBJOINETH THE ABBOT DEODAET.

God help all poor souls lost in the dark!

[This poem was first published in *Men and Women*, 1855. The Knights-Templars were a powerful military order, organized in Jerusalem, 1118. for the purpose of guarding the Holy Land and of protecting pilgrims against the infidels. In the course of time, they acquired immense wealth and influence.

But Philip IV. of France and Pope Clement V., attracted by their treasure, and frightened by their radical religious and political doctrines, determined to suppress them; and they were accused of the most indecent and criminal practices. There is no question that these charges were largely trumped up; still they were believed with piety and horror by the people for centuries. The last master of the Templars was the present Jacques du Bourg-Molay; and with his death at the stake, 1314, the order came to an end.

As Browning says in his note appended to the title, the poem describes conditions that prevailed some two hundred years after the dissolution of the Templars. As such, it does not deal primarily with Jacques du Bourg-Molay, but is, like *Holy-Cross Day*, a study of mediæval Christianity. It is upon the abbot, the leader, the chorus, and the by-standers that we should fix our eyes. The structure and sentiments of the song characterize the age; it is these we should study.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. Bearing the note to the title in mind, how must we, to begin with, suppose that this song corresponds with the facts of John's life?
2. Is the command of the abbot, lines 6-8, possible of execution?
3. What was, apparently, the nature of the sin John is first accused of?
4. Is the sentiment of line 17 such that it needs to be accompanied by "grace of lute or clavicithern"?
5. How is the character of the age indicated by the gleeful way in which the chorus repeats line 26?
6. And by the fact that the abbot directs such a song?
7. What is meant by "in the midst,' Stanza III? (Compare St. II.) And why in such a location?
8. What is shown by the circumstance that the song dwells on such details as now follow?
9. Find three expressions in this stanza, which, to a degree, indicate the coarseness pervading the age.
10. Find two similar expressions in Stanza IV.
11. Why should the bavins be "good" and "sappy," and why should the billets blaze "substantial and slow"?
12. What was the fact about the larch-heart that especially pleased all concerned?
13. What characteristic of mediæval Christianity do all these details indicate?
14. What belief of the age does line 36 show?
15. Find some expressions in Stanza V corroborating the thought of questions 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.
16. Why is one of the performers made to cross himself?
17. What was a characteristic of mediæval Christianity in respect to outward observances?
18. What was, in all probability, John's actual character, in part, since he called upon Christ in his extremity?
19. But how does the song ridicule this?
20. Why does the leader stop in the middle of his song to interject "Salva reverentia"? (Compare questions 16 and 17.)
21. What virtue does the song cause John to urge as a reason why Christ should be merciful?
22. Who was it that originally uttered the words of line 51?
23. Then why is John called a "mocker"?
24. What do you think of John's confession of faith, as given in lines 57-58?
25. What do you think John may really have said as a basis for the statement just preceding?
26. Do you accept the opinion of John that the song gives, or do you feel impelled to modify it?
27. What is gleefully meant by line 61?

28. What is meant by the rose, the petals, the anthers, and so forth, of Stanza IX? (Compare question 27.)
29. What is meant by John's plucking "at his rose"?
30. Do you accept, without question, the accusations of Stanza X?
31. What character is indicated by the abbot's praying at the close of such a song as this?
32. Who do you think came the nearer to realizing the true ideal of Christianity—John or the performers of this interlude?

MY LAST DUCHESS.

FERRARA.[1]

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's[2] hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough

1 A city in Northern Italy between Venice and Bologna.
2 An entirely imaginary character.

For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 't was all one! My favor[1] at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;

---

1 A special present he had given her, either at the time of their engagement, or in commemoration of their marriage.

Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck[1] cast in bronze for me!

[This poem was first published, 1842, in the third number of *Bells and Pomegranates,* which bore the title *Dramatic Lyrics.* Here it was called *Italy* and had a companion piece, *France.*

The speaker is an Italian duke, who has but recently lost his wife, and who is now negotiating another marriage with the daughter of a neighboring count. An envoy has come to complete the arrangements, and the duke is showing him over his palace. They stop, by design no doubt, before the portrait of the last duchess, while the duke in very polite, diplomatic, and unmistakable language indicates what he expects his new wife to be.

The poem portrays the worldliness and intellectualism that, in part, characterized the Renascence in Italy. It is greatly admired by students of Browning for the cold, clear, definite manner in which it delineates the duke's personality.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. To whom is the duke speaking? (l. 49.)
2. What has the person addressed come for?
3. What has the duke brought the envoy to see?
4. Emphasize "last," in line 1, and note what this suggests in respect both to the duke's character and to antecedent events.
5. What is there in the second line that indicates this is a great painting?
6. Find an indication that Frà Pandolf was a great painter.
7. For what does the duke love the picture—for its memories or for its artistic excellences?
8. What do lines 9 and 10 show in respect to the duke and his household?
9. What characterization of the dead duchess is there in the picture?
10. What two little compliments had Pandolf paid the duchess while she was sitting for the picture?
11. Emphasize the second and fourth words of line 14. How does the duke now account for the "spot of joy" in her cheek?
12. How do you think the "spot of joy" came there? Had she not been used to compliments?
13. Why do you suppose nobody had dared to ask, as in line 15?

[1] Like Pandolf, imaginary.

14. What is indicated by the circumstance that others had evidently had the question in mind?
15. How does the duke regard Pandolf's compliments?
16. What does he next object to in his former duchess?
17. But how does this characterize her to *you?*
18. Where does he think she should have kept her looks?
19. What criticism of her does he make in the next five lines?
20. How does he characterize the fellow that broke off the cherries for her?
21. But what do you think it was that impelled this individual to do so?
22. How do lines 30-31 characterize the duchess?
23. What would she, on such occasions, do, if her husband was by and she did not dare speak?
24. In what way was the manner of the duchess, as "she thanked men," repugnant to the duke?
25. What indication of character in lines 34-35?
26. What does the duke feel gratified at not possessing?
27. Find two expressions before this which he inserted to show the same lack.
28. What expression of contempt in line 38?
29. What did the duke think woman's sphere was?
30. From the tone of "forsooth," line 42, what appears to be his opinion of a woman's right to offer excuses?
31. What characteristic is indicated by lines 43-44?
32. What does the duke think she, of course, would do?
33. But how did she, in his opinion, overdo this?
34. What indication of her character in this?
35. Does the duke suspect he is describing his dead wife in the way he really is?
36. What was it that grew? (l. 46.)
37. How completely do you suppose the smiles stopped; that is, what were the commands he gave?
38. Did he give the commands, whatever they were, to his wife or to others? Of what is the former half of line 36 a polite and gentle equivalent?
39. What does the envoy, at this point, do and say?
40. Does he rise in response to the duke's request, or is the duke's question merely a polite remark, indicating slight surprise, and following upon the envoy's rising?
41. If the latter, what causes him to rise?
42. Find a remark after line 50 that is said merely for the sake of politeness.
43. In starting to descend, which of the two would naturally give precedence?
44. Emphasize "together," line 54, and note what is thus brought out.
45. What is the duke's object in this?

46. What remark shows that he is a connoisseur of art?
47. May there be anything covertly meant by this?
48. Is there any doubt of his getting the new duchess?
49. What has been his object in discussing his last duchess?
50. Do you envy the new wife?

UP AT A VILLA[1]—DOWN IN THE CITY.

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF QUALITY.)

I.

HAD I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

II.

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

III.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

[1] Country residence.

IV.

But the city, oh the city—the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.[1]

V.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March by rights,
'T is May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights;
You 've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

VI.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You 've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

[1] That is: evenly and correctly.

VII.

Is it ever hot in the square? There 's a fountain
to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such
foambows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance
and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do
not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her
waist in a sort of sash.

VIII.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though
you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean
lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the
corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem
a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala
is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the
resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the months of
the fever and chill.

IX.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed
church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence
rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never
a pin.

By-and-by there 's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet[1] breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so
Who is Dante, Boccacio, Petrarca, Saint Jerome and Cicero,
"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhyming,) "the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession! our Lady borne smiling and smart,
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords[2] stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it 's the greatest pleasure in life

X.

But bless you, it 's dear—it 's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate[3]

[1] Punch and Judy show.
[2] One for each of her seven legendary sorrows.
[3] The gate of the city where the Italian revenue was collected

It 's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me,
not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still—ah, the
pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks
with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding
the yellow[1] candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a
cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the
better prevention of scandals;
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle*
the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleas-
ure in life!

[This poem was first published, 1855, in *Men and Women.* Browning wrote a great deal of humorous-satirical poetry. Most of the pieces that would come in this category are long and somewhat abstruse. It is in them, chiefly, that we find those linguistic violences, with which the poet has been, quite justly, charged. Yet it is here that we most clearly see also his remarkable control of rhyme. Of this the present poem affords a few minor illustrations.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. Where had the speaker lived all his life?
2. What was his financial standing?
3. What has he noticed to suggest line 3?
4. What is it that he probably most admires in this?
5. Do you think this existence at the window would, after a while, be all he thinks it is?
6. How does he describe the situation of his villa?
7. What is your opinion of this on the score of picturesqueness?
8. How does it affect him?
9. Do you see any reason why he should think of wool?
10. Find an instance of almost childish joy.

[1] Yellow, because carried by penitents—a ceremony.

11. Find a word that seems to hint at one of his occupations out on the estate.
12. What do you think of his taste in admiring the straightness and regularity of the houses?
13. Where does he imagine he is, lines 14-15? (Compare question 4.)
14. Find another instance of child-like love for regularity and precision.
15. How does he feel towards his villa?
16. Find two bits of very picturesque and attractive description that he does not appreciate.
17. Find two expressions which show that he does not value his surroundings at their proper worth.
18. Find a further jumble of the commonplace and the picturesque.
19. Find another, in paragraph VII.
20. What remark at the end of this division is pointedly characteristic, the world over, of country people?
21. What very striking picture in the first two lines of section VIII?
22. Yet what unfitting descriptive word does he use?
23. Emphasize the first word of line 33 and note the trait of character that is thus brought out.
24. What should you, yourself, say about the picture suggested in line 36?
25. But what word shows how he feels in respect to it?
26. In what manner is line 37 spoken?
27. How does he, on the whole, feel towards the villa?
28. And how does he feel towards the city?
29. How greatly should you enjoy the clangor of a city's church-bells in the early morning, "ere you open your eyes"?
30. What indication of character in line 40?
31. What next is a source of great joy to him?
32. What, in line 43, is it he enjoys?
33. What is it that makes line 46 so humorous?
34. What sarcasm does Browning, seemingly on his own account, bring in at this point?
35. What are the humorous elements in lines 51-54?
36. What character hint at the opening of section X?
37. Pick out the particular humorous expressions in the remainder of the poem.
38. What is the effect of the rhymes here?
39. What does the speaker's open-mouthed manner of gazing at the procession show?
40. What is there sarcastic in the sub-title?

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL.

A PICTURE AT FANO.

I.

DEAR and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find performed thy special ministry,
And time come for departure, thou, suspending
Thy flight, may'st see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

II.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze.
—And suddenly my head is covered o'er
With those wings, white above the child who prays
Now on that tomb—and I shall feel thee guarding
Me, out of all the world; for me, discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

III.

I would not look up thither past thy head
Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face instead,
Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread?

IV.

If this was ever granted, I would rest
My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands,
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
And all lay quiet, happy and suppressed.

V.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!
I think how I should view the earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow was bared
After thy healing, with such different eyes.
O world, as God has made it! All is beauty:
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?

VI.

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
(Alfred, dear friend!)—that little child to pray,
Holding the little hands up, each to each
Pressed gently,—with his own head turned away
Over the earth where so much lay before him
Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
And he was left at Fano by the beach.

VII.

We were at Fano, and three times we went
To sit and see him in his chapel there,
And drink his beauty to our soul's content
—My angel with me too: and since I care
For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power
And glory comes this picture for a dower,
Fraught with a pathos so magnificent)—

VIII.

And since he did not work thus earnestly
  At all times, and has else endured some wrong—
I took one thought his picture struck from me,
  And spread it out, translating it to song.
My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
  This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

[This poem was first published in *Men and Women*, 1855. Fano is situated on the Adriatic in central Italy. There are many excellent paintings preserved in the churches of the little town—among them, The Guardian Angel. Guercino was a contemporary of Raphael and a painter of much power.]

QUESTIONS.

1. In the poems, so far studied, has the speaker been real or imaginary?
2. Who is the speaker here?
3. Who is the "child," of line 2?
4. What does the author imagine the angel will do, when evening comes?
5. Who is the "other child" that needs tending?
6. What tomb is it that is mentioned in Stanza II?
7. What does the author in this stanza imagine the angel will do?
8. Whither is the child looking?
9. How is the angel's face described?
10. What does the child not appreciate?
11. How would the author look?
12. What is the angel doing to the child?
13. What does the author imagine the angel might do to him?
14. And what would the effect of this be on his troubled spirit?
15. What adjective of Stanza IV describes the angel's touch?
16. What two words, in their very sound, seem quieting and full of peace?
17. What does line 29 mean?—all the wrong *in* the world, for instance?
18. How would the earth, skies, and sea seem different?
19. Whither was the angel in the picture looking?
20. What was the work that lay before him to do?
21. What is meant by "*though* heaven was opening"?
22. What is meant by "we" [St. VII] and by "my angel"?
23. What was the "magnificent pathos" of the picture?
24. Where was the author's friend?
25. What might the picture suggest in reference to this friend —off at the "world's far end"?

PROSPICE.

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place.
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon[1] be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be at rest!

[1] Prize.

[This poem was first published, 1864, in a small collection entitled *Dramatis Personae.*

Mrs. Browning died in June, 1861. She, no less than her husband, achieved distinction in poetry. Her work represents, no doubt, the highest eminence reached by women in verse.

Prospice was written the autumn following Mrs. Browning's death. It shows us, as does no other poem, the deep and powerful currents of feeling that made up the poet's inner life. A strenuous belief in God and immortality, and in himself, was fundamental in his character.

It may be well to subjoin another tribute to his wife, which the poet wrote, probably, the same year. It is found at the close of the first part of his great work, *The Ring and the Book,* which was begun, 1861.

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire,—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,—
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their blue,
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—
This is the same voice: can thy soul know change?
Hail then and hearken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—
That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile:
—Never conclude, but raising hand and head
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on,—so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud,
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall!

The student is further referred to *One Word More,* the last poem in the volume, *Men and Women,* published, 1855.]

QUESTIONS.

1. Under what description is the approach towards death figured?
2. What two nouns stand for Death?
3. What is meant by "the journey," "the summit," "the barriers," and the "battle"?
4. What description does Browning give of himself?
5. What is the "one fight more"? What does the author mean by calling it "the best" fight?
6. What is meant by the next sentence?
7. To whom does Browning compare himself?
8. What are the arrears that a "glad life" fails to pay?
9. *To whom* does the worst turn into the best at death?
10. What happens at death?
11. What would come to Browning at death?
12. In what tone is *Fear death?* to be read?
13. The title means, *Look forward.* What should we, ourselves, look forward to?

COUNT GISMOND.

AIX IN PROVENCE.[1]

I.

CHRIST God who savest man, save most
Of men Count Gismond who saved me!
Count Gauthier, when he chose his post,
Chose time and place and company
To suit it; when he struck at length
My honour, 't was with all his strength.

[1] In southern France, thirty miles from Marseilles.

II.

And doubtlessly ere he could draw
All points to one, he must have schemed!
That miserable morning saw
Few half so happy as I seemed,
While being dressed in queen's array
To give our tourney prize away.

III.

I thought they[1] loved me, did me grace
To please themselves; 't was all their deed;
God makes, or fair or foul, our face;
If showing mine so caused to bleed
My cousins' hearts, they should have dropped
A word, and straight the play had stopped.

IV.

They, too, so beauteous? Each a queen
By virtue of her brow and breast;
Not needing to be crowned, I mean,
As I do. E'en when I was dressed,
Had either of them spoke, instead
Of glancing sideways with still head!

V.

But no: they let me laugh, and sing
My birthday song quite through, adjust
The last rose in my garland, fling
A last look on the mirror, trust
My arms to each an arm of theirs,
And so descend the castle-stairs—

[1] The cousins.

VI.

And come out on the morning troop
Of merry friends who kissed my cheek,
And called me queen,[1] and made me stoop
Under the canopy—(a streak
That pierced it, of the outside sun,
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun)—

VII.

And they could let me take my state
And foolish throne amid applause
Of all come there to celebrate
My queen's-day—Oh I think the cause
Of much was, they forgot no crowd
Makes up for parents in their shroud!

VIII.

However that be, all eyes were bent
Upon me, when my cousins cast
Theirs down; 't was time I should present
The victor's[2] crown, but . . . there, 't will last
No long time . . . the old mist again
Blinds me as then it did. How vain!

IX.

See! Gismond's at the gate, in talk
With his two boys:[3] I can proceed.
Well, at that moment, who should stalk
Forth boldly—to my face, indeed—
But Gauthier, and he thundered "Stay!"
And all stayed. "Bring no crowns, I say!

---

1 Queen of the tournament.

2 The victor in the tournament.

3 The lines from "there, 'twill last no long time," are an interruption, due to the speaker's emotion, and are not a part of the story she is telling.

X.

"Bring torches! Wind the penance-sheet
About her! Let her shun the chaste,
Or lay herself before their feet!
Shall she whose body I embraced
A night long, queen it in the day?
For honor's sake no crowns, I say!"

XI.

I? What I answered? As I live,
I never fancied such a thing
As answer possible to give.
What says the body when they spring
Some monstrous torture-engine's whole
Strength on it? No more says the soul.

XII.

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew
That I was saved. I never met
His face before, but, at first view,
I felt quite sure that God had set
Himself to Satan: who would spend
A minute's mistrust on the end?

XIII.

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat
Gave him the lie, then struck his mouth
With one back-handed blow that wrote
In blood men's verdict there. North, South,
East, West, I looked. The lie was dead,
And damned, and truth stood up instead.

XIV.

This glads me most, that I enjoyed
The heart of the joy, with my content
In watching Gismond unalloyed
By any doubt of the event:

God took that on him—I was bid
Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

XV.

Did I not watch him while he let
His armourer just brace his greaves,[1]
Rivet his hauberk, on the fret
The while! His foot . . . my memory leaves
No least stamp out, nor how anon
He pulled his ringing gauntlets on.

XVI.

And e'en before the trumpet's sound[2]
Was finished, prone lay the false knight,
Prone as his lie, upon the ground:
Gismond flew at him, used no sleight
O' the sword, but open-breasted[3] drove,
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

XVII.

Which done, he dragged him to my feet
And said, "Here die, but end thy breath
In full confession, lest thou fleet
From my first, to God's second death!
Say, hast thou lied? And, "I have lied
To God and her," he said, and died.

XVIII.

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked
—What safe my heart holds, though no word
Could I repeat now, if I tasked
My powers for ever, to a third
Dear even as you are. Pass the rest
Until I sank upon his breast.

[1] Tighten the straps that held on the steel armor for the legs.

[2] In a combat such as this was, the antagonists would retire to opposite ends of the enclosed field and, at the signal, charge upon each other with levelled lance, each striving to unhorse his adversary.

[3] Not caring about his own guard, having flung away his shield.

XIX.

Over my head his arm he flung
  Against the world; and scarce I felt
His sword (that dripped by me and swung)
  A little shifted in his belt:
For he began to say the while
How South our home lay many a mile.

XX.

So, 'mid the shouting multitude
  We two walked forth to never more
Return. My cousins have pursued
  Their life, untroubled as before
I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling place
God lighten! May his soul find grace!

XXI.

Our elder boy has got the clear
  Great brow; though when his brother's black
Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond here?
  And have you brought my tercel[1] back?
I just was telling Adela
How many birds it struck since May.

[This is the poem that appeared, originally, in No. III of *Bells and Pomegranates* as the companion piece to *My Last Duchess*.—See page 83. It was there called *France* and was intended as a contrast to *Italy*. Perhaps no more pronounced difference in character is conceivable than this which appears from a comparison of the two noblemen. However, the poems do not portray contemporary conditions; *Count Gismond* is a tale of chivalry, while *My Last Duchess* deals with the spirit of the Renascence.

The Countess Gismond tells Adela, a friend, of the circumstances under which she first met her husband and of the events that led to their union. The two women are alone in a room of the castle, the count with his sons being temporarily absent.]

1 A hawk trained to pursue and strike game birds.

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. How is the speaker related to Count Gismond?
2. To whom is she speaking?
3. What is she narrating?
4. How long, approximately, is this after the events she tells of? [St. IX.]
5. Where is Count Gismond meanwhile?
6. How does the opening clause rank with all possible speech for sublimity of content?
7. What makes the speaker, at the very beginning, so serious and high-strung?
8. What do you, by the middle of line 3, know about Count Gauthier?
9. What additional information concerning this matter does "at length" give you?
10. When you read that it was the speaker's honor as a woman which had been impeached, do you find yourself suspecting her or, nevertheless, believing in her?
11. How comes it that you so instinctively take this attitude towards her?
12. Does she seem to think that Gauthier's villainy was instinctive with him, or that he had spent time and effort in perfecting it?
13. Is there any special reason why he might not have been a born villain?
14. How is it an indication of character that she cannot conceive of such a possibility? (Emphasize "must.")
15. Do you suppose the morning was really miserable to her then? Why does she now call it so?
16. And, similarly, why does she say she *seemed* happy?—Was she not?
17. What additional points of the story does this stanza give?
18. [St. III.] Emphasize "thought" and note what this shows.
19. Who is not included in the term "they"?
20. What word in the second half of line 2 receives special emphasis?
21. Whom does the speaker, consequently, omit from her accusation? How can she?
22. What do you already, at line 3, know as to her looks?
23. How do you know this,—because she says so?
24. What word does she emphasize in this line?
25. What trait of character causes her to put special stress on it?
26. What is her opinion of show?
27. [St. IV.] What word should be emphasized in line 1?
28. Yet what had been the attitude of the cousins towards the speaker?

29. What trait of character is then shown by the stress she puts on this word?
30. And what by her next sentence?
31. What does she here imply as to their relative degrees of beauty? Do we believe her?
32. *Why* did the cousins not say anything?
33. *What* made them glance sideways?
34. What would the speaker have done if they had spoken?
35. [St. V.] Do the first lines correspond in thought with Stanza II, lines 3 and 4? (Compare questions 15 and 16.)
36. Was her happiness the happiness of a woman or of a child?
37. What trait of character in the cousins is indicated by their letting her do everything *to the end?*
38. And by their escorting her down the stairs?
39. [St. VI.] Did she have any real girl friends?
40. Emphasize "could" and note what this shows us of her character.
41. What were the canopy and throne?
42. Why does the speaker call the latter "foolish"?
43. What do we now learn is her position in the world?
44. She excuses the cousins for much,—for what not?
45. Why not? (Compare St. III, ll. 1-2.)
46. [St. VIII.] Why did they cast their eyes down?
47. What does the pronoun *it* in "'twill" refer to?
48. What happens with the speaker at this point in her story? What causes this attack?
49. What does she mean by "how vain"? (Compare question 42.)
50. [St. IX.] What gate is meant in line 1?
51. What makes her think it strange that Gauthier should have come forth *to her very face?*
52. What is conveyed by the word "stalk"?—How could she, before the accusation, have had the contempt for Gauthier that this word seems to indicate?
53. What does the vigor of Gauthier's language tell us concerning his character?
54. [St. XI.] What must Adela have asked at this point?
55. What is your opinion of her for asking such a question?
56. What is indicated by the speaker's uttering the exclamatory pronoun first?
57. [St. XII.) How was Gismond's advance different from Gauthier's?
58. What difference in character does this show?
59. How was the speaker impressed by each, to judge from the two verbs?
60. How could she "at once" know she was saved?
61. How certain was she of the end?

62. What causes her, even after all these years, to make the highly-colored comparison of God to Satan?
63. [St. XIII.] How many words of the last four lines can be made to take emphasis?
64. How do you, in your mind's eye, see the two men so that the blow could have been backhanded?
65. Does this show anything of their mind also?
66. What made the speaker look around?
67. [St. XIV.] What was the "heart of the joy"?
68. What caused her to have no doubt of the outcome?
69. Who bade her "watch Gismond" as she imagines?
70. How can she have such a fancy now, so many years after?
71. [St. XV.] Why does Gismond have his armor "*just* braced"?
72. And what caused him to be "on the fret"?
73. What did his foot do?
74. What made his gauntlets ring as he pulled them on?
75. What does her ability to give these details so minutely after all these years show?
76. [St. XVI.] As the lists were constructed how far would each knight have to ride before he could meet his antagonist?
77. What indication of character, consequently, in the first two lines?
78. Why did Gismond not use tricks of fencing?
79. Why did he not care about his guard?
80. [St. XVII.] What effect does Gauthier's confession have on your opinion of him?
81. [St. XVIII.] What indication of refinement and delicacy in this stanza?
82. [St. XIX.] What realistic touch in this stanza?
83. What do you infer from line 4?
84. [St. XX.] In what way had the speaker's superior beauty troubled the cousins?
85. What may she then mean to suggest that their station still is?
86. Why does she not pray for them as for Gauthier? (Compare question 21.)
87. How can she pray for him?
88. [St. XXI.] Do her remarks to Gismond correspond with the facts?
89. What does this show of her?—Is this not dreadful?
90. What was it that caused Gismond to believe in her, even to the extent of taking her for his wife, and even though she spoke no word in her defense?
91. Suppose she had protested her innocence,—what then?
92. What do you think this poem is meant to show?
93. Can you find anything in her character, pure as it is, which reflects the coarser and more brutal life of the middle ages?

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH.[1]

ROME, 15—.

VANITY, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not!
Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world 's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so about[2] this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail so save my niche, ye know:
—Old Gandolf cozened[3] me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,[4]
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,

---

1 An old church in Rome.
2 Concerning.
3 Tricked.
4 There were two pulpits, one on each side of the central aisle.

And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam 's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt[1] there,
And 'neath my tabernacle[2] take my rest,
With those nine columns[3] round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble[4] all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,[5]
Put me where I may look at him.[6] True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,[7]
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,[8]
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands

1 A common grayish rock. The slab formed the cover of the sarcophagus and was to support the reclining marble image of the bishop.

2 The marble roof over the image on the sarcophagus.

3 The columns supporting the tabernacle over the slab, on which the image was to lie.

4 A red variety of marble used for ornamentation.

5 A cheap variety of marble that often scaled off like an onion.

6 That is: at the carved, reclining image of Gandolf lying on top of his tomb.

7 Olive basket.

8 A beautiful blue stone used in ornamentation.

Ye worship in the Jesu Church[1], so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'T was ever antique-black[2] I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?[3]
The bas-relief in bronze[4] ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod[5], thyrsus[6], with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine[7]
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'T is jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve.
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There 's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
—That 's if ye carve my epitaph aright,

---

1 Another church in Rome.

2 An especially fine variety, much prized.

3 The narrow ornament extending around the sarcophagus under the slab.

4 This and so forth is what the frieze is to consist of.

5 The insignium of the oracle at Delphi.

6 The spear stuck in a pine cone and wreathed with ivy, always carried by Bacchus.

7 A crumbly, grayish limestone formed by deposit from water.

Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's[1] every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian[2] serves his need!
And then how I shall lie[3] through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,[4]
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point[5]
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha ELUCESCEBAT[6] quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,

1 Marcus Tullius Cicero's.

2 A Roman writer on jurisprudence of the second century, when style had begun to degenerate.

3 That is, as the sculptured image.

4 That is, in the form of the Holy Wafer used in the Communion Service.

5 Imitating the image on the slab.

6 *He was famous.*

They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a vizor[1] and a Term,[2]
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature[3]
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
—Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

[This poem was first published in *Hood's Magazine*, 1845, with the title *The Tomb at St. Praxed's*. The same year it was included in No. VII of *Bells and Pomegranates*.

It may best be understood by observing how the hints and suggestions, throughout the piece, group themselves about certain distinct centres as follows:—

1. The conventional pious death-bed meditations of the bishop.

2. Accidental revelations of the bishop's past life and true character.

3. The superficial insincerity of his religion.

4. His love for the art, the mythology, and the learning of the ancients more than for the truths of Christianity.

---

1 The grinning or gaping masks carved as ornaments.

2 The square pillars ending in a bust, set up as boundary stones, and representing Terminus, the god of boundaries.

3 The narrow strip on top of the columns and just beneath the sloping sides of the roof or tabernacle.

5. His consequent frivolousness, his enjoyment of the voluptuousness, the luxury, and the ceremonial that characterized the central phase of the Italian Renascence.

6. The imminence of death.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. Which of the threads running through the poem do we, line 1, grasp first?
2. What is it in lines 3-4 that the bishop does not know?
3. What is the trait of character that we thus get a glimpse of?
4. Was "Old Gandolf" any better than the bishop?
5. What circumstances in respect to both himself and Gandolf does the speaker most enjoy dwelling upon?
6. Where do his pious meditations again begin, and where do they end?
7. Does the conclusion that the world is a dream follow from his preceding remarks?—Or is this merely sanctimonious talk?
8. What is about to happen with the bishop?
9. Find two or three expressions that show death to be very near.
10. Where do you find an instance of his utter un-Christian type of mind?
11. Find an indication of the artistic instincts that dominated everything at this period.
12. Where does the bishop's sense for style in architecture show itself?
13. What trait of character is indicated by line 30?
14. Where is the bishop lying? (See lines 2 and 11.)
15. Where does he imagine he is at line 31?
16. Which of the generalizations given above would seem to account for this mistake?
17. How does the speaker half confess that he obtained the money to pay for this expensive marble?
18. What other treasure has he hidden away?
19. Find an expression or two suggesting that he is wealthy.
20. What function of the mediæval church does line 43 suggest?
21. Find a suggestion that corroborates the thought of question 19.
22. What is the bishop thinking of at lines 44 and 46?
23. What trait of character again comes uppermost, in line 50?
24. What does he now again bring himself around to? (Compare question 1.)
25. But where really is his mind all the time?
26. What detail about the basalt does he suddenly remember that he has not specified?

27. What argument does he advance in support of his demand!
28. What does he, consequently, suspect his sons—or nephews —may intend?
29. Find a passage corroborating the fourth generalization above.
30. What about the suggestiveness of line 61?
31. Where do his suspicions return with terrifying force?
32. What sort of sarcophagus is it he fears?
33. What seems to be his chief reason for fearing it?
34. What variety of stone does he suddenly demand? Would this demand be possible of fulfillment?
35. What is happening with him that he thus forgets what he has been saying?
36. What regret breaks in here on his meditations?
37. What does his mind, the next moment, revert to?
38. What rewards does he promise his sons?
39. Which of them is characteristic of the Renascence more than of the times preceding or following?
40. Where does he forget what these rewards were for?
41. What side of his personality is revealed in lines 77-79?
42. Where does his pagan love of luxury and ceremonial again appear?
43. Find a line that shows he is vain even in his manner of dying.
44. Find a passage that corroborates the thought of questions 11-12.
45. What is happening with the bishop at line 91?
46. How do you account for the confusion of ideas shown in line 95?
47. And for the jumble of thoughts that follows?
48. What thought rouses him for a moment out of his stupor?
49. Find a confusion of ideas similar to line 95.
50. To what does he revert in line 100? How long does this mood last?
51. What has he forgotten at line 102?
52. How can he make a demand so preposterous?
53. What memory comes upon him next?
54. What trait of his personality next comes uppermost?
55. What is there confused about the thought of lines 111-112? How do you account for this? (Compare question 46.)
56. What causes the many breaks in line 115?
57. Where does the horror of death come upon him?
58. What do you now see is the purpose for which his sons are present?
59. Why has the bishop delayed this so long?
60. How does line 120 show his vanity?
61. With what two thoughts does he die?

"CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME"

I.

MY first thought was, he lied in every word,
That hoary cripple, with malicious eye
Askance to watch the working of his lie
On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford
Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored
Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

II.

What else should he be set for, with his staff?
What save to waylay with his lies, ensnare
All travelers who might find him posted there,
And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh
Would break, what crutch 'gin write my epitaph
For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

III.

If at his counsel I should turn aside
Into that ominous tract which, all agree,
Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly
I did turn as he pointed: neither pride
Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
So much as gladness that some end might be.

IV.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,
What with my search drawn out through years, my hope
Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope
With that obstreperous joy success would bring,—
I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring
My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

V.

As when a sick man very near to death
Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end
The tears, and takes the farewell of each friend,
And hears one bid the other go, draw breath
Freelier outside, (since all is o'er," he saith,
"And the blow fallen no grieving can amend;")

VI.

While some discuss if near the other graves
Be room enough for this, and when a day
Suits best for carrying the corpse away,
With care about the banners, scarves, and staves:
And still the man hears all, and only craves
He may not shame such tender love and stay.

VII.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,
Heard failure prophesied so oft,[1] been writ
So many times among "The Band"—to wit,
The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed
Their steps—that just to fail as they, seemed best,
And all the doubt was now—should I be fit?

VIII.

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,
That hateful cripple, out of his highway
Into the path he pointed. All the day
Had been a dreary one at best, and dim
Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim
Red leer to see the plain catch its estray.

IX.

For mark! no sooner was I fairly found
Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,

[1] Supply "had" here and the thought will be clearer.

Than, pausing to throw backward a last view
O'er the safe road, 't was gone; gray plain all round:
Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
I might go on; naught else remained to do.

X.

So, on I went. I think I never saw
Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve:
For flowers—as well expect a cedar grove!
But cockle, spurge, according to their law
Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,
You'd think; a burr had been a treasure trove.

XI.

No! penury, inertness, and grimace,
In some strange sort, were the land's portion. "See
Or shut your eyes," said Nature peevishly,
"It nothing skills: I cannot help my case:
'T is the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,
Calcine its clods and set my prisoners free."

XII.

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk
Above its mates, the head was chopped; the bents[1]
Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to balk
All hope of greenness? 't is a brute must walk
Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

[1] A variety of grass.

XIII.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair
In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud
Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.
One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
Stood stupefied, however he came there:
Thrust out past service from the devil's stud.

XIV.

Alive? he might be dead for aught I know,
With that red gaunt and colloped neck a-strain,
And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane;
Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe;
I never saw a brute I hated so;
He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

XV.

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.
As a man calls for wine before he fights,
I asked one draught of earlier, happier sights,
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art:
One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

XVI.

Not it![1] I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face
Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,
That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace!
Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

[1] That is: the speaker thrusts from him the picture of Cuthbert and his fate, which is given in the next few lines.

XVII.

Giles then, the soul of honor—there he stands
Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.
What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.
Good—but the scene shifts—faugh! what hangman hands
Pin to his breast a parchment? His own bands
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst!

XVIII.

Better this present than a past like that;
Back therefore to my darkening path again!
No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.
Will the night send a howlet or a bat?
I asked: when something on the dismal flat
Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

XIX.

A sudden little river crossed my path
As unexpected as a serpent comes.
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath
For the fiend's glowing hoof—to see the wrath
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

XX.

So petty yet so spiteful! All along,
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng:
The river which had done them all the wrong,
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

XXI.

Which, while I forded, good saints, how I feared,
To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,

Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard!
—It may have been a water-rat I speared,
But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

XXII.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.
Now for a better country. Vain presage!
Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank
Soil to a plash? Toads in a poisoned tank,
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage—

XXIII.

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.
What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?
No foot-print leading to that horrid mews,
None of it. Mad brewage set to work
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk[1]
Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

XXIV.

And more than that—a furlong on—why, there!
What bad use was that engine for, that wheel,
Or brake, not wheel—that harrow fit to reel
Men's bodies out like silk? with all the air
Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,
Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

XXV.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood,
Next a marsh, it would seem, and now mere earth
Desperate and done with; (so a fool finds mirth,

1 That is, *which* the Turk.

Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood
Changes and off he goes!) within a rood—
Bog, clay, and rubble, sand and stark black dearth.

XXVI.

Now blotches rankling, colored gay and grim,
Now patches where some leanness of the soil's
Broke into moss or substances like boils;
Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him
Like a distorted mouth that split its rim
Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

XXVII.

And just as far as ever from the end!
Naught in the distance but the evening, naught
To point my footstep further! At the thought,
A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-friend,
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned
That brushed my cap—perchance the guide I sought.

XXVIII.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew,
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place
All round to mountains—with such name to grace
Mere ugly heights and heaps now stolen in view.
How thus they had surprised me,—solve it, you!
How to get from them was no clearer case.

XXIX.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick
Of mischief happened to me, God knows when—
In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then,
Progress this way. When, in the very nick
Of giving up, one time more, came a click
As when a trap shuts—you 're inside the den.

XXX.

Burningly it came on me all at once,
This was the place! those two hills on the right,
Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight,
While, to the left, a tall scalped mountain . . .
Dunce,
Dotard, a-dozing at the very nonce,
After a life spent training for the sight!

XXXI.

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?
The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,
Built of brown stone, without a counterpart
In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf
Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf
He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

XXXII..

Not see? because of night perhaps?—why, day
Came back again for that! before it left,
The dying sunset kindled through a cleft:
The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay,—
"Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!"[1]

XXXIII.

Not hear? when noise was everywhere! it tolled
Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears
Of all the lost adventurers my peers,—
How such a one was strong, and such was bold,
And such was fortunate, yet each of old
Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

1 What the hills seemed to say.

XXXIV.

There they stood, ranged along the hill-sides, met
To view the last of me, a living frame
For one more picture! in a sheet of flame
I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,
And blew, *"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came."*

[This poem was first published, 1855, in *Men and Women.* It is, in all probability, Browning's most difficult piece.

* * *

Childe Roland is a knight who has spent many years searching for a tower hidden somewhere in the world. It is dark and mysteriously attractive, and Roland has sought it along the comfortable highways. He stops, on one occasion, to ask the way of a cripple whom he meets beside the road. This man, much to Roland's surprise, directs him, not along the well-beaten street, but off into the pathless wilderness that skirts it. There is something so insistent and compelling in the cripple's eye that Roland, though he hates him, cannot choose but obey.

As the knight picks his way across the desert, the plain changes, becoming ever more desolate. Horrible scenes encompass him; frightful suggestions crowd upon him. If he, nevertheless, presses on, it is not that he is impelled by any ambition or guided by any hope, but because of the sheer inertia, the sheer indifference, that comes with endless failure.

But Roland seems, at length, to recognize his surroundings; his dulled mind becomes aware by degrees that the tower is in sight. Yet so hopeless have his life-long disappointments made him that he sees only a "low squat turret," surrounded by the multitudes of his peers that have failed. But he has been equipped for the quest with a little more endurance, a little more steadfastness than they. He raises the "slug-horn" to his lips and, with his last strength, blows the note of success achieved.

* * *

Attempts to find a meaning in this poem have very generally been met by the statement, from Browning himself, that it has none. But with us the term "meaning" is apt to stand for some added social or personal signification; in our criticism we are overmuch given to searching for expressions, phrases, and suggestions with which we may construct our interpretation. Attempts after this manner to attach a meaning to the horse, the marsh, the little river, will always be futile; *Childe Roland* contains no definite schematic allegory.

Still—and this is a doctrine unacceptable as yet to most Saxon minds—poetry may, as music does, convey deep, spirit-

ual truth without the employment of definite situations and specific declarations. Furthermore, good poetry cannot be produced at the will of the writer; it must first exist potentially within him as a state of mind. If we succeed in identifying the mood which found its expression in *Childe Roland,* we shall have the key to the poem.

With our author, success was slow in coming. Many of his first poems were published in obscure London magazines. *Sordello* and *Strafford* were, at their first appearance, failures. The series of pamphlets known as *Bells and Pomegranates* was printed because his volumes would not sell. It was not until 1855, when *Men and Women* appeared, that the foundations of his fame were laid. His discouragements, his despondencies, his doubts of himself, his outlook upon life throughout this long period of comparative failure are mirrored in *Childe Roland.* This poem was written in 1852; and just as the knight's despair was greatest immediately before the end of the quest, so the gloom that overshadowed the poet's mind was deepest on the eve of success.

* * *

But Roland's experiences are ours also—they belong, at any rate, to those of us who have actually or through sympathy known what a *life-work* is. The Great Goal, like the Dark Tower, is hidden in the unknown. Like the knight, we mistakenly think we can reach it along beaten paths. But it is only beyond untrodden wildernesses that the New Thing is ever found. The decisive circumstance, the insistent idea, the strange inner bent, that lays hold of us and turns us away from safe ventures into unexplored uncertainties, is, of course, hateful; yet these unknown realms are what we must traverse; Roland's cripple was his best friend. Columbus, that critical last day, Luther, that winter in the Wartburg, and Lincoln, when he visited Grant in the trenches about Richmond, had such a spiritual wilderness about them. The first two, at least, saw, like Roland, only failure in their scope; success, though so near, was undiscerned.

* * *

It is strange that this poem should seem so obscure—to those of us at least who may, at some time, have brooded upon the eternal mysteries. May this not be because it is *symbolistic* and thus almost unique in our literature; Poe's *The Raven* and Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner* are the only other poems that here suggest themselves? Symbolism is a phase of the Allegory; but whereas, in the latter form of literary art, we select—quite mechanically—the needed details, and thus construct a logical interpretation consistent within itself; in the former, we must proceed in a direction the reverse of this—must proceed outward from the inner mood to an identification of the external, objective, art-elements. To do this easily and fluently seems to be beyond the power of the ordinary Saxon mind. Yet is it this freedom from definite imagery, this intangible suggestiveness that is the secret of supreme power in art: it is this that places symbolism alongside of music as a vehicle of pure feeling.

Symbolism has flourished to some extent in Germany and much in Scandinavia. In the literatures of the latter countries, specimens, fully as intense as *Childe Roland*, may be found as early as the year 1000. May this form of literature not have been more richly developed with these peoples because the German and the Scandinavian temperament is profounder, more introspective, more mystic—but also less brilliant, less artistic, less correct, less objectively dramatic than the Saxon? Placed beside a poem like Ibsen's *Up on the Mountain Meadows, Childe Roland*, from its resemblance in method, seems scarcely English; and yet it appears to touch profounder and more hidden depths of the soul than any other poem in our literature.]

QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS.

1. What was Roland seeking; what had he just asked the cripple?
2. What counsel did the cripple give him? Was this what Roland had expected?
3. Why did he hate the cripple? Did he appreciate his advice?
4. Why should Roland assume that the cripple would write his *epitaph* in the thoroughfare?
5. Why, on the whole, does the cripple seem so hateful in the knight's eyes?
6. If Roland distrusted the cripple so much, why did he follow his directions?
7. Why is the tract which hides the Dark Tower said to be *ominous?*
8. What do we now find [St. IV-VIII.] that Roland has been doing all his life?
9. What does line 21 tell us?
10. What does the knight think is better than the life he has been leading?
11. What does he compare himself to? [St. V-VI.]
12. What had he often heard prophesied of him?
13. What, on the side of real life, is meant by the thought of lines 39-40?
14. What does Roland assume will be the result of his quest?
15. What had he always been afraid to do, and what had the cripple forced him to do?
16. What success had he gained up to meeting the cripple?
17. Could the tower be reached by any other route than across the "ominous tract"?
18. What class of individuals in real life always keep to the beaten track?
19. What is the state of Roland's mind as he turns aside into the indicated path?
20. Was there any getting back to the safe road? What is meant by this?

21. What state of mind is shown in the last line of Stanza IX?
22. What is the general character of this tract that hid the dark tower?
23. In real life, how do the years spent within this ominous tract look?
24. Find a dozen items inserted to deepen the horror of this region.
25. What two memories come to oppress Roland?
26. What are the characteristics of the "little river" that make it fit the environment?
27. Does the country improve as Roland penetrates farther into it? What may this signify in life?
28. In what climax do these horrors end?
29. Yet at this very culmination of Roland's misfortunes what happens?
30. [St. XXIX.] How does fate step in to aid Roland?
31. Why should the knight not have recognized the place "after a life spent training for the sight"?
32. What is meant by saying that the recognition came to him *burningly*?
33. Yet how did the tower look to him when he at last reached it? What does this signify?
34. What is the significant thought in line 3 of Stanza XXXI?
35. What memories surge over Roland at the last?
36. What does he fear?
37. Yet what does he do?
38. What do you suppose then happens?

Cathedral High School

Date Due

NOV 1 '78			
MAR 28 '79			
MAY 16 '79			
APR 26 1978			
APR 12 1979			
MAY 9 1979			
APR 20 1983			

DISCARDED
From
LIBRARY
Cathedral High School

dark

pampas seating

---

sofa

chair

ottoman

T2-DHH-432